

DR JEKYLL, HIS NEW WOMAN, AND THE LATE VICTORIAN IDENTITY CRISIS

Laura Ferguson

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CRISIS

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DR. JEKYLL, HIS NEW WOMAN, AND THE LATE VICTORIAN IDENTITY CRISIS

By

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ABSTRACT

I have written a novel as a prequel and parallel narrative to Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. The accompanying critical commentary draws on psychoanalytic and feminist perspectives, interpreted for "the complexities of *fin-de-siècle* British society" (Kucich, 2007, p.35), and examines my novel alongside other adaptations of *Jekyll and Hyde*. Although my work may invite comparisons with Neo-Victorian novels such as works by Sarah Waters, Michael Cox's *The Meaning of Night* (2006) or Michel Faber's *The Crimson Petal and the White* (2002), I would argue that it has more in common with Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966) and Sophie Gee's *The Scandal of the Season* (2008), both of which are prequels respectively to *Jane Eyre* and *The Rape of the Lock*. My research explores the potential origins of Jekyll's decision to divide himself – the psychological roots of "his desire to reveal himself and his desire to conceal himself" (Laing, 1960, p.37). I have used this premise for both a psychoanalytic and a feminist perspective, drawing on the key works of Freud, specifically his writings on the unconscious and in relation to dreams, and Gilbert and Gubar's seminal text *The Madwoman in the Attic*. The decision to use these texts as a framework was made using the rationale of two primary perspectives: Stevenson's novel was inspired by a dream he had, which led me to Freud, whose theories fit so well with the manifestations of the Jekyll/Hyde personae, and whose analytic attention to sex and gender, with the argument that psychological and social forms of gender oppression cause a manufactured and oppressive role for women, is correlative with a feminist approach. Gilbert and Gubar's critique analyses nineteenth century female writers, and it is my argument that Stevenson's novel suggests that Jekyll's rigid beliefs about his 'other' can be seen as both a resistance to the feminine within himself, and as an unconscious identification with women who felt suppressed in a patriarchal society and constrained by that society's rigid gender expectations. This feature of late Victorian culture which Stevenson's novel appears – on the surface - to actively resist, is symbolised by the anonymous and one-dimensional female characters within his novel, therefore this narrative motif is the starting point for my novel.

DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my own unaided work. It is being submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at the University of Bedfordshire.

It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in any other University.

Laura Ferguson 2nd January 2016

H/E – a novel

By Laura Ferguson

I wish to dedicate this work to Natasha, Josh and Indiana – the unholy trinity.

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H/E – a novel

Laura Ferguson

PROLOGUE

You know this story. Some of its inhabitants you have met before. But were you told everything? It must be borne in mind that there are two sides to every story.

The year 1851 was, for London at least, one which evoked anxiety or constituted an *annus mirabilis* of excitement and wonder. For this was the year for the symbol of the Empire to display its magnificence to those who ventured among the great throng of citizens eager to view the vast glass Palace and its strange and exotic displays. For Arturo Lionel Oliver Noel Gunn the occasion unconsciously solidified in the mind of this inquisitive six-year-old the notion that people were capable of the most spectacular achievements, and of the more everyday, but no less marvellous, feat of enjoying themselves. Some of this innate playfulness and good humour may have been an inheritance from his parents; the arrangement of his name suggested itself to his father when he realised that he used the phrase 'come along' each time he took his infant son in his arms.

Not far from Arturo stood a boy equally enthralled by the wonders around him. For the adolescent Henry, however, the atmosphere of the Great Exhibition was altogether more disconcerting. It cannot be guessed whether or not the lack of an accompanying parent, of which the little boy had the dubious advantage, affected his response. But whatever the reason, Henry's feelings were of an unequivocally confused sort. Unlike the younger boy, he did not wander with a wide-eyed and joyful naivety, but felt inexplicably perturbed by the mix of foreign and native, the familiar and the unknown. Categorical objects seemed strikingly ordered compared to the disarray of people. Here was a silver nose, there was some Australian wool (which looked remarkably similar to British wool). In this spot was a sewing-machine, that one the Indian Koh-i-Noor diamond, disappointingly dull. And that damnable child, with his squirrel-coloured hair, was taking it all in with an air that was, to Henry, at once infuriating and admirable.

Five minutes passed and Henry found himself at the Greek display, next to the boy with the red hair. The father bent his head intermittently at every verbal whim of his child, who was presently peering at sponges and fondling minerals. He seemed fascinated by a green one

and Henry noticed that his father expertly diverted his attention with a chunk of bread and honey. Something in the interaction between father and son irked our young Henry, and for a few moments he revelled in visions of coaxing the boy towards the 'Silent Alarm Bedstead' display and watching as he tipped into the cold water bath. He wondered if the rust from his hair would spread to his body. Henry could not say how it had happened, but he suddenly found himself looming over the prone figure of the boy. At first he appeared as weak and useless as a puddle, but when his father pulled him up Henry noticed the defiant indignation in his eyes. Profuse apologies were offered, but the older gentleman seemed more concerned that something was medically amiss with Henry than with the fact that his son had been knocked over.

The incident a few minutes behind him, Henry's attention was held by a young woman nearby. He was mesmerised by the expansion and contraction of her chest. If he took one of those swords nearby and drove it through a lung or her heart the movement would desist. She would become a cadaver, not a person. Gone would be the blossom of colour on her cheeks and the velvety quality of her skin. Her eyes would be unable to betray emotions with dilations, flickers, downward glances. The mechanisms of her mind would not be signposted with every tilt of her head, every bite of her lip, every delighted smile and nervous flutter of her fingers. How simple, how significantly insignificant could be the switch from 'on' to 'off.' Not that Henry wanted to switch her off; he merely observed that it could be done with relative ease. Our Henry was not a psychopath, you understand, not a cold-blooded killer, but he often wondered that, despite mankind's progress and achievements, his superior powers of reasoning, an individual's existence could, as a snap of the fingers, be extinguished. Was all this muscle flexing of the Empire's, therefore, not missing the point? Should we not, as a species of pioneers and explorers, be addressing more fundamental issues of progression and advancement? Yet Henry was still a youth and had the excitement and anxiety pursuant to his age. Everywhere was a reminder of the possibilities before him, chances he could reach out for as easily as plucking a grape from the vine, piercing the skin and consuming the sweet flesh. There were opportunities he could devour, had he bravery enough to match his inherited wealth. Should he make the most of his natural talents, that is a handsome appearance and a formidable intellect, the world with all its sundry treasures could be his. But which path should he follow?

A young couple caught his eye. The fellow had an excess of colour in his cheeks, a feature which seemed unfortunately permanent. Or perhaps it was fortunate, as his shame would never be visible. Henry knew he was looking at a courting couple by the subtle signals and by the presence of an older lady in their wake. Henry wondered why it should be that humans trusted each other so little, until he remembered his father's admonitions that human freedom engendered long-lasting consequences that did not have their parallel in the animal kingdom. *We are not all equal, Henry, not all capable foragers. Some are equipped only to hope that others will forage and provide for them. Similarly, a woman is not like a female animal and not equipped to provide without first being provided for. Therefore care must be taken that the chosen male is willing to provide.* Sometimes Henry did not fully understand his father's words but the tone conveyed to him that he was expected to understand, as a fellow male, his father's advice. And Henry learned from his mother that, although the role of head of the house involved many responsibilities and challenges, having to explain or justify his philosophies on life was not one of them.

Although Henry was as a sapling on a tree, his fifteen years had honed powers of observation quite sharp in one so young. Henry himself noticed that other males his age were bolder and less serious. They may notice the young lady's comely appearance and her charming demeanour, but would they notice the way her behaviour changed subtly when the older lady was distracted by some or other curiosity (at this moment, some French porcelain) and she dropped her handkerchief. The pink-cheeked young man took advantage of this lapse in the chaperone's vigilance and held the errant accessory across his mouth while crossing his eyes. His companion reacted in a way that Henry found difficult to believe was genuine. Surely only an infant would see such comedy in a gesture so immature. But Henry also understood that this was a kind of mating ritual. Perhaps, then, his father was mistaken, as this kind of behaviour should be taken as a sign that this male was incapable of providing for his chosen female. Surely a more animal manner of proof would be appropriate. If it was a matter of strength and capability, a more suitable display for the female would certainly be required. Although Henry was an intellectual, he was also given to frequent bouts of imagination; had he been female he would at these times have been dismissed as a daydreamer, although his facial expression was one of stern and intense concentration, rather than a maiden's wistfulness.

Henry imagined the young man grabbing his sweetheart, hauling her underneath himself and running through the Palace with her, grunting loudly at any approaching males and occasionally felling one with a savage blow. He then imagined the man pushing the female to the floor, face down, and engaging in brutal rutting. Far from being hurt in any way, Henry imagined the female afterwards appearing nonplussed and rather affectionate. She stroked her beau's cheek, causing the male's breath to slow as he emitted satisfied and boasting grunts.

"Young man," a loud voice woke Henry from his rumination and he felt himself being shaken by the shoulders. Henry did not know if he was embarrassed more by the fact that the shaker was the fellow who just a moment ago was forcing himself on the young lady next to him, or by the sight of a blob of cream on the older lady's collar.

"Young man, do you require some assistance?" the red-cheeked conqueror was asking.

"No. Thank you, no, I am quite recovered, sir," Henry replied.

"It would be no trouble to escort you home, young fellow. Eliza and Mrs. Rockcliffe can be taken home and I will see that you are safely returned to your parents."

"You are kind, sir, but I can assure you it was nothing," Henry smiled.

"Well..." the young man's returning smile was hesitant, "I am inclined, by your demeanour, to believe you are recovered. However, will you assure me that you will get some rest before too long? I am a doctor, you see, and – well...I don't know if you were aware, but you were..." at this point the man drew a deep breath and searched Henry's face for something Henry was sure he would not find, "you were, for want of a better word, snorting."

"Snorting?" Henry bowed his head slightly, his eyes darting from stranger to stranger in a bid to ascertain how widely this spectacle had been witnessed.

"Oh young man, I do not mean to embarrass you," the doctor looked stricken, "I merely wished to impress upon you the gravity of the situation. I would strenuously advise some rest." He lowered his voice to almost a whisper, "animal noises and such behaviour

are a sign of mental overuse. As a friendly stranger, I would advise you not to take life too seriously, young fellow. More play and less work.” To conclude the encounter, and save Henry further embarrassment, the doctor patted Henry’s arm and proffered his own like a wing to his female companion. Henry felt too irritable to continue with his exploration of the exhibits and made his way through the crowd towards the exit. Although it was clearly an unfortunate coincidence, Henry’s pace quickened when someone handed him a guide to the new Middlesex County Asylum.

Having returned home, he considered the young doctor’s advice and decided that some studying would in fact be beneficial. The resolution that he would attend Cambridge University had been arrived at by a discussion between Henry and his father that had stretched over several evenings. And so, despite the friendly doctor’s admonition, Henry could ill afford more play and less work. For two hours he toiled over physics and mathematics and when he declined a game of chess with his father, he was pleased to note a proud glint in his father’s eye. The glint later played on Henry’s mind and he found himself wishing he had accepted his father’s offer, despite sensing it would have been the wrong decision if his father had simply been testing Henry’s commitment to the agreed path. His concentration broken, and his mood now rather irksome, Henry fancied himself hungry and so went in search of some late-evening sustenance to ease the pain of his study.

The sight of Molly, despite her obvious lack of breeding, brought to Henry’s mind his musings on the young couple at the Exhibition. As she bent to set the tray of food before him, Henry noticed the sudden filling of fabric with plump flesh. It irritated him the way it was implied that covering a body with fabric would render the involuntary moving of muscle and flesh invisible. Somehow it only made the body more inviting, more tempting, just as covering a room’s contents with sheets would only make one curious and incite a strong urge to rip off the sheets to discover what needed so preciously guarding. But Molly, of all people! Surely, among the girls who made suitable servants, his parents could have found one a good sight plainer. Nobody could deny Henry’s studious nature but did his parents really believe that their son could apply himself wholeheartedly to keeping his mind on a higher plane when Molly existed in such close proximity? Was this also a test of his father’s to see how competently Henry could strengthen his resistance and moral resolve? Were his parents truly ignorant of the effect Molly had on him? Did they not notice that, when

Henry's eyes drifted upward from a page to the girl? Did they not see, and it must have been highly visible, the physical effect that so pretty a girl – a blossoming woman – had on their son? How could they fail to notice the burgeoning swell which no book was able to disguise? Frequently Henry would be forced, despite his long legs, to pull the small table towards him so that the offending area was out of sight. Perhaps Henry had done a sterling job in masking this particular evidence, but his restless disposition and burning face cannot have gone undetected.

Molly, on the other hand, was most definitely aware of the effect she had on Henry. It seemed to him that, far from feeling alarmed by Henry's amorous signals, she herself displayed signs of attraction. She often met Henry's gaze with, if not a smile, certainly the promise of one. Her eyes would then float downwards, like a bird fluttering to a lower branch, only to swoop upwards again with an accompanying blush staining her cheeks. Henry began to wonder how she would respond if he asked her to put down her tray and sit next to him. How would she react if he placed a hand on her knee as he spoke to her? Henry could not restrain his thoughts from then on, and Molly found herself at the mercy of the young man's imagination, one minute a salacious 'jezebel' (a word used with alarming frequency by his father), the next a demure girl unsure of how to respond to Henry's rough handling of her.

Henry awoke from his reverie at the sound of smashing crockery and the metallic echo of the tray hitting the floor. He had his hand gripped round Molly's wrist, like an eagle's talons holding a mouse. Molly's eyes were wide with terror and Henry worried for a moment that she would pick up the tray and smash it down on his head. But she quickly seemed to realise that Henry did not intend to hurt her and so relaxed slightly against his grip. As Henry withdrew his arm and placed it under the table, Molly hurriedly collected the crockery pieces onto the tray. She would not look at Henry but asked him, "Would you like me to fetch you something, Master?"

Henry felt like grabbing the tray from her and smashing it over his own head. "No Molly, thank you. I – I am sorry if I hurt you."

"Oh, Master," Molly shook her head vigorously, "you did not. No, I –"

A door opened and Mrs. Cosgrove, the housekeeper, entered the room. Her eyes swept the scene and Henry felt that, despite his status in the household, her disapproving expression was aimed more towards him than towards Molly.

“Good evening, Master,” she nodded at Henry, quickly turning her attention to Molly. “Molly, hurry girl, and leave the master to his studies.” Did Henry detect a note of derision in the last word?

“The fault was mine, Mrs. Cosgrove,” Henry told her, but more in the spirit of asserting his authority than in defending Molly. “I was not looking when I reached out and knocked the tray from Molly’s hands.”

Mrs. Cosgrove smiled but her lips were tightly held together. Henry fixed his eyes on hers until she turned away. As she left the room, he picked up his book and resumed reading.

“Thank you, Master Henry,” he heard Molly say softly as she stood in the doorway. But when Henry looked up with a smile, her eyes were fixed on the rug and her blush, Henry was certain, was one of sadness rather than a guilty attraction. He wondered how Molly’s life would progress as he went through university and the differences between them would multiply. What qualities would be possessed by the fellow whose destiny was to enjoy the physical pleasures of Molly? Would his grip be as strong as Henry’s and how would Molly respond?

He placed the book on the table and made his way back to his room, thinking only of Molly and feeling the mounting pressure in his body. He turned the key to lock the door and simultaneously unbuttoned his trousers. He sat on the edge of his bed and, where his hand gripped himself, he imagined Molly’s small fingers holding him, stroking and rubbing him. Her blush had spread to her neck and her chest, which seemed to struggle with the depth of her breathing. He bent down to touch her throat and to meet her lips with his own, moving her hand more frantically against him. His thoughts were a frenzy of carnal images, a frantic kaleidoscope of Molly’s delicate mouth, her smooth skin, her full breasts which, it seemed to Henry, Molly was both ashamed of and secretly delighted with. He sensed his mounting excitement but also his disappointment with his mind’s need to race through the sequence of events. Gone was the translucent quality of her body and soul as he was presented with a

sudden image of Molly climbing up onto him, feeding him into herself with a hunger which thrilled Henry, pulling him to her and rubbing her whole body against his as she cried out with a savage passion. This crescendo was too much for Henry and he fought against his collapsing body with a violent thrusting of his hand, using his other hand to steady himself. His legs buckled but he continued his frantic motions while sitting on the floor. Eventually the sharp edge of his bedframe became the predominant sensation and his physical pleasure was overtaken by a growing irritation and disgust. He removed his trousers as if they had caught fire and got up to pour some water into the bowl on the washstand. As he washed, first his body then his hands, he felt a pleasing sense of punishment from the sensation of cold water against his flesh. Not yet a self-aware adult, Henry laboured under the illusion that one day, after years of self-discipline, his ascetic side would reign supreme. He undressed, put on his nightclothes, chose a tome from his bookcase and commenced reading and making notes, until his eyes closed and the book thumped onto the floor.

CHAPTER ONE

When Arturo Gunn was nine years old a sister had come along. Far from feeling dislodged by this new thing which could divert the attention and affection of his parents, the new infant caused the already lovingly enmeshed family to knit even tighter. Arturo was mesmerised by his sister, frequently begging for his mother's permission to pluck the baby from her crib so he could cradle her in his arms whilst he sat on the nursery rocking chair. Everything about his sister, from her downy head to the way she seemed, when she slept, to have passed contentedly into death, to the way her fingers would curl instinctively when he placed a finger against her palm, was a source of fascination for Arturo. Within two years it was apparent to her parents that Evangeline was a precocious child, charming and contented, but always just on the acceptable side of impertinent, and with a knowing gaze that seemed to unnerve almost all observers other than her family. But it wasn't until Evangeline was nearly three years old that her knowing gaze was discovered to have a reason other than pertness behind it. One evening, shortly before dinner, while Mrs. Gunn was reading and enjoying the pleasant hum of her children playing, Evangeline pointed at her brother and uttered the word 'blue.'

Arturo laughed. "What's blue, Jelly?"

Mrs Gunn chuckled. "Really, Arturo, must you call her Jelly? She has such a pretty name."

"She likes it, mama." He smiled at his mother momentarily then turned again to his sister. "What's blue, Jelly? Where's the blue?"

His mother put down her book and stared at her daughter, then at her son. "She knows colours?"

"Yes, Madre," Arturo smiled in triumph, "I taught her."

Mrs. Gunn placed her book on a side table and knelt down by her son. "You are such a lovely person," she said, clutching him to herself. She then held him at a slight distance and studied his face for a few moments. "You are such a good, kind boy," she said,

smoothing some hair away from his forehead. "Now, Eva," she said, turning towards her daughter and sitting on the floor, "show mama what a clever girl your brother has seen." She held out her arms and made a beckoning motion, prompting Evangeline to run and throw her arms around her mother's neck. Mrs. Gunn tickled the girl and nuzzled her neck. She held her skirts towards Evangeline. "What colour is this, my darling?"

"Colour!" exclaimed Evangeline.

Mrs. Gunn looked at Arturo and laughed. "Yes Eva, what colour?"

"It's red!" said Arturo theatrically.

"Not red," said Evangeline, frowning at her brother, "blue!" She smiled, prodding her mother's leg quite firmly.

There was a duet of approving claps and utterances, which Evangeline imitated. She spotted a cushion on a chair, which she fetched and deposited at her brother's feet.

"Red," she declared.

"Yes, Jelly," laughed Arturo. "What colour is this?" he held his shirt cuff between his thumb and forefinger.

"Green," answered Evangeline, clapping with delight at her own intelligence.

"Oh, so clever!" Mrs. Gunn was almost squealing.

"It is, it's green," Arturo beamed, "not blue."

Evangeline's expression was one of sober patience. She pointed in the direction of her brother and once again uttered the word 'blue.'

Mrs. Gunn sat perfectly still, wearing a frown. Arturo was momentarily frozen with confusion. He went over to the window but saw only a wintry sky. Perhaps his sister associated it with a perpetual blue. He pointed upwards and said "blue" as he looked at his sister.

Evangeline clambered onto the window seat and perused the sky. Finally she said "bird," at which Arturo nodded in agreement.

"Come children," Mrs. Gunn held her arms wide. The children folded themselves into her. "Clever girl, Eva." She gave several quick kisses on her daughter's cheek. "Arturo, you are a most excellent tutor!" She smiled and kissed the top of her son's head.

"Have I confused her, mama?" the boy looked dejected.

"Of course not, my darling," his mother answered, stroking his face. She was puzzled but knew instinctively that this was not a straightforward case of either misleading instruction or confused understanding. "Hurry darlings," she bundled the children off her lap, eager to distract Arturo. "Run and hide! Mama will come to seek you!"

Evangeline fell over with excitement and Arturo scooped her up, heading quickly for the nursery door.

"Count to one hundred before you come for us, mama!"

"Darling, I will count to two hundred so you can find somewhere very difficult for mama," her voice trailed off as the nursery door was banged shut behind the children and eager feet searched for hidden nooks. She muttered a low 'hmm' as she sat pondering the strange occurrence. She did not know what to make of it but was reluctant to mention the incident to her husband. As mentally and physically robust as he was, of the two of them he was the more anxious parent. It was understandable, given his medical history, but the most minor and insignificant anomaly could send Fergus Gunn spiralling into an anxious silence for days. No, she would not mention it. If something was seriously wrong there would be other signs, she was certain. In which case, God forbid, she would not have to mention it to Fergus, for he would see for himself. She began to scold herself for dreading the depth of his grief more than the potential cause, but stopped when she remembered that she should be counting. She counted to a hundred and left the nursery, calling "Mama will find you!"

A few days later, Mrs. Gunn had set aside an afternoon to go through the household records with Mrs. Farrow, the housekeeper. Both ladies were becoming increasingly frustrated with certain figures that did not tally correctly. Mrs. Gunn had to reassure Mrs. Farrow on several occasions that a blaming finger was not pointing towards her. After all, she had been in service with the Gunn household for many years now. No, there must have been some human error along the way with ordering, forgetting to write down certain things, or some

such reason. In any case, the problem seemed to have begun six months ago, just around the time of poor Isabella having to leave to care for her sick mother. It was a difficult time for the entire household, for everyone had loved dear Isabella. But it was particularly traumatic for Arturo, who had seemed to have almost as deep an affection for the nurse as he did for his parents. At that time, Mrs. Gunn wondered if employing a nurse was in fact in the best interests of the children. Mr. Gunn, however, was insistent that unless the time came when he could share the responsibility of caring for the children equally, a nurse was necessary if his wife were to avoid being driven to exhaustion.

Fergus Gunn was an enlightened man who seemed to have been born with a preternatural sense of egalitarianism and personal freedom. He had been so outraged by his parents' attitude to his betrothed (they had called her, among other things, a "foreign sorceress"), that from that time to this the only news he had received of them was through his maternal grandmother – ironically, a woman who had always seemed to Fergus a witch, if ever there was one. Yet he would have been delighted if that particular sorceress had been alive now so she could fulfil the roles of both grandmother and great-grandmother. Still, she would have been too old to manage the wild energies of young children and so there remained the necessity of a nurse. Thank god he was a self-made man and had not been reliant on an eldest son's inheritance. Pity the destitute folk whose women were haggard beyond their years through a lack of respite from maternal duties. He had seen many a young, pretty face steadily ravaged by the demands of family life while many a husband remained unscathed, unless they too were ravaged by the demands of the alehouse.

Mrs. Gunn, prompted by the first pangs of a headache and the arrival home of her husband, suggested to Mrs. Farrow that a break for some tea should be taken. With a clear head and refreshed palate, perhaps some hitherto unseen discrepancy in the accounts would present itself. But tea would also have to wait, as a shrill scream was heard from somewhere upstairs.

Sofia Gunn was by anyone's standards a graceful and elegant woman, but she was also practical and possessed an athletic prowess. Cursing the constraints of her long skirts which prevented her climbing two stairs at once, an effluence of panic-stricken and increasingly louder Spanish phrases came from Mrs. Gunn as she sought the source of an ongoing

commotion. She had not heard Mrs. Farrow heading in the opposite direction, declaring that she would fetch some water and towels and be up immediately. In fact, Mrs. Farrow had assumed that blood would be found and so had employed tactics to ensure that she would send instead the housemaid to attend the incident. Naturally, Peggy would in all likelihood faint, but Mrs. Farrow felt that the young girl, being slight and delicate, would cause much less damage to both herself and the furnishings than the damage caused by her own cumbersome frame.

Mrs. Gunn opened the door to the nursery and was relieved, just for a moment, to see both children alive. Her attention was needed equally by them; Arturo was red-faced and shaken and appeared quite dazed, while Eva stood rigid and screaming as if under some malevolent spell. Mrs. Gunn drew both children to her and attempted to soothe them whilst addressing the nurse. Mrs. Gunn had never felt any warmth towards Miss Reed, but she felt a pang of sympathy as she noticed the nurse's bleeding ankle.

"Mrs. Farrow is on her way with some towels and water, Miss Reed. What happened?"

Miss Reed looked at her employer as if the latter was something repugnant. "My injury will need more than water and towels," she spat with a ferocity that jolted all sympathy from Mrs. Gunn, who instinctively drew her arms more tightly around her children. She appraised the nurse fleetingly, as a cat towards a mouse, and took a deep breath to calm herself. "I thank you to use a civil tone with me, and to remember you are in my house." She looked pointedly at her ankle and added "water and towels are more than sufficient." There was just enough vehemence behind her voice for the nurse to sense that any further provocation towards Mrs. Gunn would bring recriminations which would outweigh the pain of an injured ankle.

The nurse, however, chose not to heed her own advice. "I am only too aware that I am in your house, madam." She shot hostile glances towards both children, and Evangeline matched her hostility with a swiping motion which alarmed even her mother. "I am also unfortunately aware of the pain in my ankle caused by that child," she continued with another hostile stare and a dramatic rubbing of her leg. "She is a savage."

“Don’t you say that about my sister, you horrid woman”! Arturo’s outburst was accompanied by a fresh rush of blood to his face. Mrs. Gunn noticed now that her son was wearing some of her clothes. This alone wasn’t a cause for alarm, but she wondered how her son had managed to be in her room for as long as he apparently had been, unhindered by Miss Reed. Something was quite awry here and Mrs. Gunn was determined to ascertain the true nature of events which had occurred just prior to what she now realised was Evangeline’s scream.

“It is rare, Miss Reed, for even a wild dog or a savage to attack unprovoked,” Mrs. Gunn said in a calm voice which belied her increasing unease. There came no response from the nurse so she continued “I am still waiting for an explanation about precisely what happened.”

“I reprimanded Master Arturo, after which I was attacked by his sister.”

“You struck me!” Arturo shouted with a sob.

Mrs. Gunn’s fingers tightened round her son’s shoulders and her jaw clenched as she waited for a denial from the other woman. None was forthcoming, only a defiant glare at Arturo. “I will ask you one more time for an explanation and if you continue to act in this manner you will be turned out of my house.”

Miss Reed’s temper was cooling as her employment prospects were coming into sharp focus. “Look at him, madam, and you will see for yourself. He has ransacked your wardrobe and, furthermore, dressed himself as a girl. Why, it’s...it’s...unnatural.” The woman rubbed her ankle and winced for good measure.

Mrs. Gunn disentangled herself from her children, placed Evangeline in her brother’s arms and strode towards the nurse, who straightened her posture abruptly, uncertain of the other woman’s intent. The two women stood almost nose to nose. Mrs. Gunn was momentarily distracted by the smell of alcohol coming from Miss Reed, which shed sudden light on the reason for the imbalanced housekeeping figures. She looked back at her son and asked, “Did she strike you, Arturo?”

“Yes, mama, she did – like this,” he slapped his head, “and this,” he slapped his cheek.

Mrs. Gunn turned to face the nurse. “Did you do that?”

“It is my job to discipline –” is as far as Miss Reed got with her reply and the next sound that was heard from her was a gasp, as Mrs. Gunn gave her two hard slaps in succession, one to the side of her head and another across her cheek.

Immediately afterwards, Peggy entered the nursery carrying a bowl of water. She could make no sense of what was going on between Mrs. Gunn and Miss Reed, and the silent stares of the children were unnerving her, so she stood meekly at Mrs. Gunn’s side and awaited further instruction. Miss Reed was voicing all manner of protests but Mrs. Gunn stood impassively as an oak tree in a storm. Finally Miss Reed stopped speaking. She sat and began rubbing her cheek and ankle, breathing heavily and looking around the room as if unsure of exactly what to do next.

Mr. Gunn entered the room and said “Mrs. Farrow informs me that someone is injured, is a doctor needed?” He looked first at his wife, who was glaring at the children’s nurse in a most disconcerting fashion. He gathered from the way the nurse was behaving that she was the injured one but evidently not in need of medical attention. His children were uncharacteristically subdued so he asked them if they were quite well.

Evangeline pointed at Miss Reed and looked at her father with a grave expression. “Bad green lady.”

Mr. Gunn sensed that his wife had things under control so he went to his children and took them by the hand. “Come children, we will venture downstairs and you can tell your father all about your day’s adventures.”

As the children prepared themselves, Miss Reed attempted to persuade Mr. Gunn of the injustice against her.

“You would be advised to save your breath, Miss Reed,” Mrs. Gunn interjected, at last looking at her husband, who returned her gaze with an assenting nod of loyalty. “I appointed you, I negotiated your wages, I sought the reference from your former employer.

You will therefore do me the courtesy of continuing to address me with anything you wish to add. If you have nothing else to add, you must gather your belongings and leave our home immediately.”

Miss Reed gave an impatient sigh and continued to address Mr. Gunn, at which point Mrs. Gunn grabbed the bowl from Peggy and calmly tipped the entire volume of water over the nurse’s head. Miss Reed reacted with much gasping and noises of indignation, but Mrs. Gunn stood firm and regarded the nurse with cool contempt.

“You abuse my household, you have been drinking while in the charge of my children, you judge and strike my son as if you are the worst kind of god, and finally you ignore me as if I am below my husband. I hope the water has washed away both the alcohol and your insolence.”

Miss Reed had at least the good sense not to further inflame Mrs. Gunn, but instead turned her attention to poor Peggy. “Don’t just stand there with your mouth gaping, fetch me a towel and clean clothes,” she snapped.

Sofia Gunn’s retort was swift and sharp. “She will do nothing of the sort. You are a common thief, a liar and a hypocritical bully. I will not have you in my house any longer. You will wait in the garden for your belongings and if that does not suit you, then you must find lodgings and your belongings will be sent there. Leave my sight and my house at once.”

Mrs. Gunn followed the nurse through the house, listening to the snivelling and sighing with impatience. When they reached the front door, Mrs. Gunn reached round the nurse, opened the door and said, in a raised voice, “oh be quiet, you idiotic woman,” sending her over the doorstep with an exasperated shove.

*

Mrs. Gunn loved reading stories to his children at bedtime but that evening he was having some trouble persuading his usually enthusiastic daughter to choose a book. She was preoccupied with the damp patch of carpet which bore the only visible sign of the day’s events. He plucked from a shelf one of Evangeline’s favourites, but still the damp legacy held more fascination. Arturo, too, was more interested in discussing the significance of

both the nurse's anger towards him and his sister's mystifying habit of identifying invisible colours.

"Fret not, my son," Mr. Gunn reassured the child, pulling him up onto his lap, "one problem has gone, and the other problem - well, it isn't a problem, eh?" he smiled.

"But papa, I don't understand why Miss Reed was so angry with me," the boy frowned. "If I anger someone, shouldn't I know why they're angry? What did I do wrong? Mother doesn't mind us going into her room as long as we are not untidy and I wasn't untidy papa, I promise."

Mr. Gunn's head felt heavy. He imagined, before he had children, that he would have the power and the influence to teach and protect them from everything, but he knew now that this was not the case, that life allowed other lessons and influences to mould and shape children's minds. Fergus Gunn, for possibly the first time in his life, felt small and powerless.

"If you had been untidy, son, she still would have had no right to strike you." He searched his son's eyes and saw his need for answers. He sighed, "Some people want the world to be simple, to stay the same. They want boys to behave as boys and girls to behave as girls, as sure as the sun comes up in the morning and the moon comes out at night. Their minds are too small to fit in other ideas. He paused and looked again in his son's eyes. "Do you understand?"

"I think so, papa," Arturo replied, and his father could see the strain on his son's face. "But why did she not think for a while and maybe an idea could have fit in somewhere?"

Mr. Gunn laughed and held his son against his chest, kissing the top of his head. "Why indeed," he agreed in a resigned voice, "but sometimes we are closer to animals in our reactions. What we don't understand we fear and sometimes we strike out in defence, lest that thing we fear come and eat us up." He felt his son's arms go round him as if seeking comfort and insight.

Arturo sighed and said, "Maybe I don't understand. But I'm sure I will when I'm older...Why did Jelly say Miss Reed was green?"

"Hmm, well I don't fear that but neither do I understand it." Mr. Gunn surveyed his daughter, making a mental note to take her to an eye specialist.

Arturo suddenly sat upright. "Perhaps Jelly could see her fear, papa."

"What do you mean?"

"Miss Reed didn't understand me, so she feared me. Perhaps because she feared me she hated me, as people do when they fear dogs. Perhaps Jelly saw her fear *and* her hatred."

Mr. Gunn didn't know what he thought, let alone what to say. He looked concerned so Arturo said, "*that* is not something to fear, papa. If I could have seen those things, I may have escaped Miss Reed's anger."

"You did not make her strike you, Arturo. She chose to do so out of ignorance. But you are right about your sister, if she has this...ability." He stopped to think. "Miss Reed didn't see enough, and Eva saw all," he murmured. "Hmm, a perspicacious wee lassie."

After a few moments, Arturo slipped off his father's lap, announcing that he was very tired. He got into bed, at which point the damp spot lost its appeal for Evangeline and she climbed in next to her brother. Arturo was patient with her and allowed a certain amount of fidgeting before he gently pushed her head down.

"You have a perfectly fine bed of your own, Eva," laughed Mr. Gunn.

"I will put her in when she has fallen asleep papa, you don't have to wait. What were you thinking about?"

"Oh, I was just remembering a poem; I had quite forgotten it until now."

"What is it?"

"Do you remember I told you about a poet called Stephen Lewis Robertson? It is one of his."

"Tell it to us, papa."

“Very well then, settle down,” he cajoled, chuckling at Evangeline’s sleepy clapping. He cleared his throat:

“For if perchance in black and white you choose to tread your way,
your life will be a lengthy blight, and days be never gay.
Then light your night and shade your day, and season life you must,
lest black and white should dim to grey, and thence to ash and dust.”

Arturo’s eyelids were heavy but Evangeline, as if to endorse the poem’s message, thrust towards her father a book of fairy tales. Fergus Gunn took the book and began to bring the stories to life.

On the floor below, his wife lay on their bed, looking up at the ceiling in an attempt to empty her mind. The housekeeping figures were to regain their balance, she felt certain. If only the world’s prejudices could be addressed with such simplicity.

CHAPTER TWO

In 1878 the Royal Academy displayed a painting called 'The Survivors,' a work which showed the survivors of the Battle of Balaklava. There was a small crowd in front of this popular picture and a few people were shedding tears, as had many a spectator during the course of the day. The outpouring of emotion could perhaps have been attributed to the disaster which had occurred only a week ago, when hundreds of passengers returning home on *The Princess Alice* had drowned. Whether or not the abundant sewage had contributed to the tragedy was to be debated for some time to come, but some of the artists were hoping that the fragile state of the public could only be a good thing for their work.

Next to the battle picture was a work entitled 'Trinity,' with the explanatory card stating that the artist was Arthur Oliver. Arturo Gunn watched from a distance as people gathered round, stopped to appraise the picture, and wandered to the next one. Arturo was reminded of groups of ants which his sister, as a child, had found endlessly fascinating. Arturo used to tease her but she would simply turn up her nose and say to their father "I believe they are communicating with each other, papa." How much more simple life would be if people were ants, Arturo mused. These visitors moved in all different directions and could not reach an agreement of opinion. Judging by their facial expressions, most were quite comfortable with the blood and distress of the battle scene, but disconcerted by the painting beside it. The problem seemed to be the woman's appearance; disapproving comments came from both male and female observers. Arturo stood far enough away not to hear everything, but close enough to detect the odd word such as 'dark-stained,' 'peasant,' and 'impudent.' Arturo conjured a word of his own: 'ignorant.'

One gentleman, he noticed, had come to look at the painting several times. Arturo wondered why, as the gentleman had no companion and was therefore not coming back to settle a disagreement. *Ah*, thought Arturo with a wry smile, *then the disagreement was within the man himself*. The gentleman's face was enigmatic, revealing a world of conflict behind a thin veil of bonhomie. The time the man was taking over his consideration of the work gave Arturo the chance to study him. He really was exceptionally handsome, Arturo realised. It had been a long time since Arturo had found anyone this attractive. Of course, he

had to be careful and discreet; the world, for all its advances in civilisation, remained unenlightened. No matter, Arturo was quite content to watch the man for as long as the man was there to be watched. Perhaps Arturo was not the only person in the room who lived by the motto *Incognito ergo sum*.

The gentleman was dressed exceptionally well and his cane was similar to the one used by Arturo's father. He remembered the enthusiastic discussion between his parents, his mother explaining the care she had taken when choosing her husband's present. It had a polished blackthorn shaft with a Derby handle made from cherry wood, finished with a silver band. It had the same marking so Arturo guessed it was from James Smith & Sons in New Oxford Street, therefore the gentleman perhaps likely resided in Bloomsbury. Arturo was impressed, not with the wealth the man unmistakably possessed, but with his obvious appreciation of beauty. The man was older than Arturo, but the evidence for this was in his demeanour and comportment rather than his appearance. His face was very beautiful; Arturo thought that he should be the subject rather than the admirer of a painting. The line of his jaw was exquisite. He wished the man would turn round to reveal the whole of his face, hoping that the remainder would not be a disappointment. The gentleman seemed to suddenly lean more heavily on his cane, at which point his knuckles went very white. Arturo prepared himself to assist, should the man faint, but just as suddenly both the hand round the cane and the man's posture relaxed. His hands were large, Arturo noticed, but elegant, with fingers that, had they been slimmer, would have looked like the fingers of an artist. *But still*, Arturo smiled, *those fingers would likely give pleasure unsurpassed by any artist*.

At that moment the man turned and looked directly at Arturo, whose smile was stuck as if he had been immortalised on the canvas. He was momentarily stunned, partly by the gentleman's timing and partly by his face. Arturo guessed that the man had come to the exhibition after whichever event had caused him some distress. Unfortunately, the paintings clearly were not good enough to distract the gentleman from his woes and Arturo wondered if the man's troubles were of a personal or professional nature. Yet, as troubled as the man seemed, there was no disguising his masculine beauty. Arturo felt as if the gentleman was waiting for him to say something, maybe to explain why he had been watching him. The gentleman was approaching and Arturo wondered if he had been watched by this man at some point. As his father had warned him, until the world caught up

with some people, it was prudent to be discreet and to conduct oneself with caution. Well, at least he has not playing it fast and loose with those dogs which frequented Cleveland Street.

"It's attracting more than its fair share of interest, would you not say?" Arturo nodded, still smiling towards the painting.

"I have been feeling the same way about myself," the gentleman replied.

"Ah. I must apologise, I am an interminable observer of people, and people in turn do not normally observe this of me," Arturo smiled.

The gentleman smiled but his voice sounded strange when he muttered, "*a flâneur*." He turned again towards the painting. "One can understand the interest in this work, it is exceptional." He seemed on the verge of losing himself once more in the picture.

Arturo moved to stand alongside the stranger, who glanced briefly at his neighbour before returning his gaze to the picture. "What do you see that is exceptional?"

The gentleman blinked, then frowned and turned slowly towards his acquaintance. "Do you not feel it is so?" Arturo noticed that only one eyebrow was raised, as if the gentleman was amused by the other's ignorance.

"I am merely interested to know what *you* see," Arturo smiled, then added "I appreciate artistic endeavours, but I feel I am no expert and I enjoy hearing the opinion of a connoisseur, as you seem to be." He was overdoing it, he knew, but he was in a playful mood and wished to engage the handsome stranger in conversation for as long as possible. He noticed that his acquaintance's face seemed to possess a remarkable range of emotions, some of which would appear at exactly the same time on different parts of his face. At this moment, the top half registered something close to disdain, yet his mouth contradicted that message, as if a smile was loitering at the corners and waiting to be invited to join the rest of his face.

The stranger gave a low and languid laugh and slowly blinked. "I suspect you of false flattery, sir," he began, pausing as if waiting for a confession from Arturo. He tapped Arturo's foot slowly with his cane and continued, "no indeed, I am certain you flatter me

falsely. Yet I have warmed to you, I cannot say why. You have a charm about you, a kind of candour and devil-may-care attitude, it seems to me. Therefore I will honour you with an honest reply to your question.” He turned to the painting and seemed to study it as if this was his first encounter.

Arturo felt a mild impatience creeping up on him; how many times did the man need to look at a painting before he could give an appraisal? After all, Arturo hadn’t asked whether or not he found the painting pleasing, just what it was that so intrigued him. Yet Arturo also knew that one would often have exactly the right answer in his heart yet be unable or unwilling to give voice to this answer. Sometimes a thought or emotion felt sacred enough to keep to oneself. Nevertheless, this opinion Arturo wanted to hear.

At last, the man turned to his new friend, but his expression was once again inscrutable. “As I said, I like you. Therefore, I will forgive your apparent insensibility in having overlooked the obviously superior elements of this work.” He turned back to the painting but continued to address the listener. “The composition, you see, reflects a real affection – a passion even – between the couple. I can see it would be offensive to some, perhaps because there is a vulgarity to it – the use of colours is striking. Maybe the issue is the lady’s heritage. She is very beautiful, yet her beauty is real, it is flawed, and -” he stopped speaking abruptly, looking at Arturo as if he had appeared from nowhere. “I must say, I feel rather foolish having just noticed that you have precisely the same eyes. Hmm. Ah...” he smiled and nodded, as if he had just understood a joke from last night’s dinner engagement. “So that is the explanation for your surveillance. Very droll. A very amusing exercise for you, no doubt.” He gave a small bow and added “I do enjoy a little intrigue.”

“I am afraid the intrigue is yours alone, sir, for I have not the faintest idea to what you allude.” Arturo was genuinely perplexed; the man’s observation was correct, but he had clearly taken the observation down a path of his own making.

“Come, sir,” the man tapped Arturo’s arm playfully with the cane. “I have found you out! You discovered this lady had eyes coincidentally identical to your own and you wish to see which of the foolish public has the keenest powers of observation to spot such a likeness. I find myself envious of the surplus hours of leisure you have in which to engage in such a sport.”

"I see," Arturo smiled, surprised by the man's strange reasoning. "You are to be commended for the observation regarding the likeness. However, your powers depart thereafter."

"My word, you are an obstinate fellow," the gentleman replied, "I really think..." his words evaporated like candle smoke.

Arturo turned to look for the source of distraction. Ah, the one person he never minded stealing his moment in the sun. One who had the added advantage of acting as a barometer for indicating which way the object of his affection's predilections swung. Looking at the gentleman's face, he knew without doubt that his hopes for reciprocal interest were dashed. He had seen this expression before, many times. Men of Arturo's persuasion had been known to be distracted by her, their eyes wandering like a dog after a scent, but the look was one of detached admiration, as if appreciating a fine painting or a sleek racehorse. Men like this gentleman, however, were captivated and usually tried and failed to conceal their lust. Few of them acted on these impulses, for there was something forbidding about women such as this, a beauty which, in its magnitude, presented too much of a challenge. This particular lady was not dismayed by this, but Arturo was disappointed at the folly of men's judgement, for she was also pure-spirited, kind and generous. This gentleman was probably too old for either of them, he decided.

Evangeline sashayed towards them, her skirts rustling over the gentleman's shoes as she came to stand beside Arturo. She didn't seem to notice his friend, casting him not even a cursory glance. She offered a cheek and when Arturo was close enough, she turned her head so that Arturo's lips made contact with her own. Arturo knew without looking at the man that his face would bear an expression of bewilderment. He seemed too worldly to be scandalised, but one never knew. Evangeline laughed and Arturo looked at her with a weary but amused expression.

"My sister is one for amusing exercises and little intrigues of a more straightforward nature, perhaps you would prefer her company to mine. I warn you, though: she has a nature more obstinate even than my own."

"My *brother*," the young lady began, turning to the stranger, "knows very well that when a man accuses a woman of obstinacy, he means that she is inclined to argue too well."

"It is true," Arturo conceded with a laugh and graceful motion of his head.

Evangeline offered her hand to the man. "I am Evangeline. I must say you are better dressed than Arturo's usual friends."

The gentleman took her hand and gave a small bow, his eyes fixed on her face. He wore an expression of obvious attraction, obvious to all but Evangeline, and Arturo's hopes for a freshly amusing sport were rekindled.

"Henry. I made your brother's acquaintance only this evening. Should I become further acquainted with him, perhaps my attire will begin to suffer." He smiled broadly at both brother and sister.

Evangeline returned his smile with a cool appraisal. Arturo knew that her reaction wouldn't be quite the one anticipated by the gentleman, who likely expected the usual demure and sweet behaviour to which he was no doubt accustomed. He was to be bitterly disappointed.

"I rather think your deteriorating attire would be London's loss, so I would not advise that you become further acquainted with my brother." Arturo noticed the mischief flashing in her eyes as she smiled.

"May I instead become further acquainted with his sister?" the gentleman returned the mischief, noting the lady's peculiar habit of looking around him, just outside him, as if some ghostly presence were attached to his perimeter.

Evangeline's eyebrows rose almost imperceptibly as her smile unfolded. "I rather like your direct speech, Henry. It reminds me of Arturo and I have a very great affection for my brother. As to your question, I am sure we will again become acquainted, assuming you also attend this sort of event regularly."

Arturo was impressed with the man's gracious acceptance of an obvious rejection. He bore no expression of anger or hurt, merely a curious combination of wariness and surprised admiration.

Henry turned to Arturo. "You have a very unusual name, are you foreign?"

"My mother is from Argentina. My father said she had more right to bestow a name, given the ordeal of birth."

Henry seemed taken aback and Evangeline laughed. "Which has shocked you more, the fact that our mother is foreign, or that she was allowed to choose the name of her son?" Arturo heard the sharpness in his sister's voice.

"Actually, I am rather struck by both, although, as you rightly imply, there is no logical reason why I should be."

"No *logical* reason. But your shock is understandable and a common reaction when presented with something other than a made-to-order family." Evangeline smiled graciously, but her tone was tepid.

"How disappointing that, despite my pretensions to the contrary, I show myself to share the thinking of the common man." Arturo noticed another flash of mischief in the gentleman's eyes.

"Disappointing indeed," Evangeline said. With that, she adjusted her hat and said to her brother, "come Arturo, Papa is expecting us."

Arturo, despite agreeing in principle with his sister, felt a pang of discomfort on behalf of Henry. He offered his hand, which Henry shook. "May you continue to appreciate exceptional art," he grinned.

"Indeed," Henry grinned in return, "and exceptional women." He stole a glance at Evangeline, who regarded her brother with a wolfish grin.

"Art, you are a frightful tease," she gave Arturo a gentle slap, and turned towards Henry. "My brother painted this, Mr. —," she blinked at Henry and turned again to Arturo. "How very modern! I have been engaged in repartee with a gentleman whose surname I know not." She returned her gaze to Henry. "Well, Mr. Common-man, your new friend painted this picture. The lady with the dog is the foreigner responsible for my brother's exotic name. Now, we must bid you adieu and goodnight. Be wary of strangers."

Henry smiled and said to Evangeline, "take care of your brother." He watched them leave, wondering how he could see her again. He wished to possess her, it was true, but the greater attraction lay in the thought that she may willingly succumb to his possession. A finer creature he had never seen: eyes like green gemstones; hair like a sunset, or a warming fire, or a forest of autumn trees. In the midst of such an impact, only the usual metaphors sprang to mind but the implication behind the blazing, wild imagery was not lost on Henry. Her hair had an unruly quality; its waves seemed to undulate chaotically to the command of every enthusiastic turn of her head. And that adamant, insolent walk; was it deliberate in its effect? Yet her retroussé nose, which lent to her face a nymph-like quality, could throw one's verdict into confusion. Indeed, he *had* seen those equal to her in beauty, yet none who so exquisitely disconcerted him. He turned to study the painting once more, this time with the once-removed acquaintance of the couple therein. *A precise analogy for myself*, thought Henry, *a carefully crafted picture for the outside world, disguising the disorder inside.*

CHAPTER THREE

Evangeline was late for a dinner party. Her father was solving a crossword puzzle, having decided that he would forgo the dinner party in favour of exercising his brain more than his voice.

“Papa, are you quite sure you will not accompany me? Who will laugh with me should the company consist entirely of bores?”

“You wicked child,” her father laughed, “Adelaide Coombs dotes on you. Not many young ladies are the object of such adoration.”

“Fie, father,” she mimicked his Scottish accent, “you know very well Miss Coombs adores me simply because I sprang from your loins. Had I inherited a different father she would pay me no more attention than any other young filly.”

Her father glanced at the clock. “Hurry along now, Eva, you do not want to miss the first course.”

Evangeline’s face puckered. “I am quite sure I may actually live longer should I not ingest another Salmon Royale. I cannot understand why she hasn’t replaced the cook. But what shall I give our dear Miss Coombs as the reason for your absence?”

“You can inform her that I have fewer years to spare than you, child, and I intend to spend them in the company of a good book and a good whisky, both of which, unlike Adelaide’s dinner guests, are never a bore.” He laughed at his daughter’s feigned annoyance.

Evangeline leaned closer to her father and kissed his cheek. “I shall tell Miss Coombs that you are very ill and she must visit at once.”

Fergus Gunn smiled and said, “Whisht! Your mother is returning home in three days; if she finds Miss Coombs here, you may well find a more interesting ingredient in your next Salmon Royale.”

Evangeline gasped slightly and said, "I must buy some Jasmine from Penhaligon's as a homecoming present, I have missed her terribly."

"As I have Eva, yet she is the best person there. She has a man's brain for business and a woman's heart for passion. And you know your mother cannot stay in England all year round, she would become quite insane."

"Oh Papa, I do not complain, I would not want a dull fireside accessory for a mother." She stood and patted her father's arm. "I must go, I do not want the guests falling asleep without me. Are you certain you won't accompany me?"

"In all honesty I'm stachie today, dear. I would be in miserable spirits having to sit in those uncomfortable chairs. You forget my years."

Evangeline took his hand in both of hers, held it to her cheek and kissed it. "Nonsense, Papa, you are fine fettle. But make sure you rest those stiff joints and I will tell Miss Coombs that you are sad not to be with us."

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Evangeline took her place next to the hostess, who said "Oh my dear, it is *splendid* to see you. I thought your head may be lost in a book so that you would miss the entire evening." Evangeline knew Miss Coombs was teasing her in a kindly fashion, so she smiled indulgently.

"Your father has not accompanied you this evening; he is not ill I hope?"

"He has many business matters to attend to, Miss Coombs. He sends his apologies and asks that you visit for tea very soon." Evangeline wanted to laugh when she imagined her father's face on hearing of her impertinence. In fact, he was very fond of Adelaide Coombs, it was merely her dinner parties which held little appeal.

"And your mother? She is still in Argentina?"

"She returns on Monday, I am delighted to say. Father misses her dreadfully, of course, but the joyful atmosphere she brings on her return is almost worth the price of her temporary absences."

A man laughed and Evangeline turned to see Hastie Lanyon's face creased with amusement. "Indeed!" he exclaimed, "I wonder if I might be able to quote your sentiment as a way of persuading Mrs. Lanyon to accompany your mother on her next visit!"

Miss Coombs tutted and bit her lip and smiled. Amid the laughter, someone had started coughing and Evangeline noticed Mr. Utterson, her father's lawyer.

"Why, Mr Utterson," she beamed, "how perfectly lovely to see you."

Mr. Utterson seemed almost embarrassed to be acknowledged with such enthusiasm. He had known Evangeline all her life and was very fond of the family. The boy, however (*boy! he had long been a man*), was a slight concern. Although Utterson was inclined to let his fellow man decide for himself what was right and wrong, he did not like to think of shame or suffering visiting the Gunn family. Fergus was too discreet, of course, to discuss his family's personal business, even with a long-standing friend, but he was also too much the altruist and did not seem to fully appreciate the possible repercussions of his son's leanings. Utterson had attempted on several occasions to subtly advise his friend on the seriousness of the rumours, but Fergus seemed impervious to suggestions that Arturo should follow any path but his own.

"The pleasure is mine, Miss Evangeline. I am glad to see you're well. And how is your brother, my dear?"

"Arturo is very well, Mr. Utterson. He leaves for Paris in a few weeks."

"Paris?" Utterson raised his eyebrows and nodded slowly. "Hmm, excellent...excellent." He was certain he had not suggested Paris as a suitable environment for Fergus's son. Yet he supposed it was preferable to Cleveland Street.

"Yes, he has friends over there, you see. One of them has made arrangements for Arturo to exhibit some of his paintings at an event organised by some prominent Parisienne." She was preoccupied with picking her way through the salmon dish when she recognised a voice.

The voice was asking "But will this prominent *Madame* be introduced to the artist before or after she has seen his work?"

Evangeline looked towards the voice and recognised the gentleman she had met at the Royal Academy. He was very handsome, she now realised, but she was slightly unsettled by the way he smiled at her. She had not forgiven him for his apparent narrow-mindedness and yet he would insist on being rather challenging. "Oh, I am quite sure Arturo will introduce himself properly on this occasion. It is only very gullible looking people my brother enjoys toying with."

Henry was twirling the stem of his wine goblet, apparently absorbed by the play of light on the liquid yet wearing a smile that suggested such pleasure that Evangeline wondered if the man had discovered in his drink a rare jewel. Miss Coombs had interjected an innocent remark about Arturo ceaselessly goading everyone, men and women alike. The doctor should not take his mischief personally.

"I was not offended, for he was charming in his mischief. On the other hand," Henry began, looking towards Evangeline, his gaze direct as he placed the glass on the table but kept one finger on the rim, "it could be that I enjoyed toying with you both and was well aware of the origins of the painting." His smile lacked a triumphant quality, yet Evangeline was not experienced in the ways of romantic preambles and wondered if this was an example of a man who used tiresome confrontation to disguise his attraction. Men could be quite tedious, she decided, but maybe etiquette was to blame. One was rarely encouraged to be direct in one's communication and all sorts of verbal games and deceptions took place. Well, the only entertainment to follow dinner would be some disastrous piano recitals; therefore she would take her cue from Henry and engage in a little verbal tennis.

"My good man, if that is the case I must disappoint you and snatch away your crown as king of deceit by informing you that, once again, the Gunn siblings share the throne of deceit, as it is I who is, in fact, the artist." She felt pleased this time, at the shock on the doctor's face.

He bowed his head theatrically and conceded defeat with raised eyebrows, a smile and an upward motion of his glass.

Evangeline lifted her chin, her own eyebrows raised in a challenge. "I sense your silence is not a concession, but rather a cowardly form of distrust. Could it be that women artists are also a new concept for you?"

Henry laughed out loud at this and Evangeline felt an inexplicable twinge of rapport with this handsome doctor. Her 'combative' humour and 'strident' style of speech (their words, not hers), sometimes deterred men from attempting to acquaint themselves properly with her, which to Evangeline had the advantage of saving unnecessary time and emotions. It was not that Evangeline was conceited, but she had a strong sense of her strengths and no reason to believe that any good would ever come from false modesty.

For his part, Henry had the good sense to know that a woman such as this one would be more than a passing interest. Only the dumbest man was looking for a silly, frilly doily of a woman for a companion.

"It is very unusual to encounter a man who finds me amusing, doctor. Excluding, of course, my father and my brother."

"It is very unusual to find myself amused by a woman, Miss Gunn."

She narrowed her eyes. "I would be flattered if I did not find such a statement derogatory to my sex."

"I mean it merely as a statement which reflects my experience of women, not as a statement on womankind."

"In that case, it must be that you have not been to the right places where amusing women are to be found, or that you haven't the sufficient intellect to realise that you have, in fact, met a good number of amusing women."

Dr. Lanyon laughed very loudly and Miss Coombs put one hand to her mouth in mock shame: "Oh doctor, I fear you will never again accept my dinner invitations!"

"On the contrary, madam, this is the most interesting evening I have enjoyed for some time," Henry smiled.

"You do seem to flourish a little unnaturally in situations where others would feel uncomfortable, I have noticed," remarked Dr. Lanyon, with a gaze which Henry found somewhat hostile. Really, the man could be a tiresome bore at times. Fortunately, Henry's spirits were too high for Lanyon's arrow to hit the mark.

Evangeline, however, felt slightly affronted on Henry's behalf and she decided to compensate. "I feel you are being a little unkind, Dr. Lanyon." She smiled politely at him, and turned towards Henry. "The doctor's unnatural flourishing is of no more concern than our cultivated orchids, don't you think? That is to say, he thrives in an environment which mimics his native surroundings."

Henry was intrigued by this young woman's statement, if slightly unnerved by the unwitting accuracy of her insight. Lydia had been of a remarkably similar disposition to Evangeline. The thought made Henry feel momentarily melancholy until the familiar sensation of irritability took hold of him.

"On the subject of native environments, may I assume you are in the habit of staying in yours for the sake of a book, rather than hastening to be in the company of dull intellects?" What had started as the ghost of a smile became wider, as a reflection of Evangeline's appreciative grin.

"In my defence, my native environment contains a quite large number of very interesting books which make it difficult to hasten to be in the company of even very sharp intellects."

"Indeed?" Henry's face again acquired that strange combination of frown and smile. "And which engaging tome caused this evening's tardiness?"

"Well..." Evangeline hesitated, "not all of my books, of course, would be found interesting by everyone."

"I am inclined to believe from that clause, that the book in question was in fact a poor substitute for an evening with your fellow man."

Evangeline laughed in a way that thrilled Henry, a full and loud laugh, unconcerned with any potential offence she may cause, or any breach of feminine conduct.

Mr. Utterson coughed again and said "Discuss the subject of books with Miss Gunn at your peril, Henry. She has been a prolific reader since childhood."

Evangeline smiled at the lawyer. "I am glad that my father has informed you that my tastes did eventually mature beyond 'Aunt Mavor's Nursery Tales for Good Little People.' "

"Indeed you did," Miss Coombs nodded slowly, lowering her cutlery in contemplation. "In fact, I am very curious about your thoughts on Bathsheba Everdene."

"Ah," Evangeline nodded slowly, an expression of relish seeping across her face while she stirred her soup rhythmically. "I put forward the proposal that Boltwood is an unsuitable prospect for any woman."

"Oh, I rather like him. But what of the lady?"

Evangeline waved her spoon with dismissal. "Miss Coombs, I believe Hardy's genius is in demonstrating the ingenuity of women who find themselves in an unwinnable situation."

Miss Coombs made a noise of feeble assent and Henry said, almost without thinking, "What is freedom? Ye can tell, that which slavery is, too well."

Evangeline's head snapped up, her eyes shining "You like Shelley?"

Henry briefly glanced at her neighbours, as if embarrassed at this public acknowledgement of a private utterance. He occasionally made the mistake of thinking that what had been said aloud had been a silent thought. "I admire his poems, particularly that one."

She regarded him for a few moments, her head tilted slightly, before Miss Coombs diverted her attention to the subject of Gabriel Oak. The rest of the evening dulled incrementally, as Henry and Evangeline were monopolised by other people and finally subjected to the dreaded piano finale. Evangeline made her way back home and Henry took a diversion through an unsavoury quarter, the lewd gestures and calls of the women barely penetrating his thoughts of Evangeline.

" 'Ere, mister," said one with a comely figure but rotten teeth. She grabbed herself between her legs and leered at him, "'ave you eaten, or d'you want some prime cunt?" She and her friend cackled as they watched the tall figure disappear into the black night.

CHAPTER FOUR

Evangeline had breakfasted early as she had awoken to find herself in the mood for perambulating. She was not prepared to ask herself if there was a connection between this mood and the dinner party three nights ago, since when her curiosity about the doctor had increased. She simply wished to do a fair deal of walking and only the very necessary amount of thinking. She had felt a strange sense of oppression and an inexplicable need to be moving, to breathe more greedily, to act as a selfish child. In short, she needed to run free. But where this need came from she was at a loss to say. Her father was unusual in his liberal attitudes towards the movements and social activities of his daughter. Her mother set an example which taught Evangeline that women were entitled to travel as freely as men. She became irritated that she was engaged in the activity of thinking far more than she had intended, so brushed the dilemma away with the chosen explanation that the air must be of a particularly stifling quality this week. She dusted her mind with the efficiency of a chimney sweep and decided that the morning called for tailored frivolity.

She walked to Hyde Park and relished the pleasure with which the ducks enjoyed the bread she threw. A pair of geese edged closer towards her and she held out a bread-topped hand to them. A goose approached her, looking both wary and trusting, and its forceful peck took her by surprise. She realised that not since childhood had she enjoyed this pastime. How perfectly ridiculous. Whatever had she been so inordinately busy with that she had not the time to feed waterfowl? She realised she must have physically ruffled because a goose retreated and shook its feathers. "Well quite," she said indignantly, and smiled and continued to feed the ducks and geese and babble away to them as if they were her infants. She felt rather pleased with herself that she had succeeded in manufacturing exactly the mood she had desired. How wondrous the world was, how full of love and hope and beauty. A shadow of sadness settled on her; how she wished everyone could feel this happy. What could she do to help people? How could she address the problems of those whose fortune of birth had cursed them to a life of misery. She felt it her duty to do something, but what? She hoped one day to travel, to be a woman of industry and enterprise, like her mother. Yet she knew that along the route she was taking this very day, had she but taken a turn to the right or to the left, or ventured a few steps to the street hiding behind, she would have seen the faces and heard the voices of people who were without life's necessities. But to consider

such things called for a serious mood and planning for action. Today she had put aside for levity; to allow any heaviness to weigh her down would drain her strength.

Evangeline wandered through the park, her strong will succeeding for a second time in conjuring a gaiety she had been in danger of losing. Her joyful state was manifested outwardly, her countenance being a mere whisker from a persistent smile. In consequence, those whom she passed were either disgruntled or cheered by this young lady's apparent contentment, in the strange way that another's pleasure is either resisted with resentful stubbornness, or caught like a cold. Men tipped their hats at her jauntiness, or else they appeared affronted by such unfeminine boldness at such an early hour. Ladies smiled and raised their chins in an unconscious reflection of Evangeline's overt self-regard, or else they scowled at her blatant flouting of the rules of etiquette, which demanded daytime behaviour for a lady to be like that of the violet, not the hothouse flower. Evangeline stopped to buy some confectionery and just as she was taking some coins from her purse, a little boy ran up to the stall, pointing and asking excitedly for the lady's wares. A young woman with a pram was approaching, a look of mild exasperation clouding an exceptionally pretty face. She had clearly been remonstrating to no avail with the boy.

"Please, please, Miss Nancy, I will be silent all afternoon."

At this remark, Evangeline smiled at Nancy, who couldn't help laughing.

"I do not believe that is possible for you, Master James. But in any case, you should be silent for the next fortnight and you would still get nought, for I haven't any money."

The boy's face disintegrated and Evangeline bent down to him and took his hand, her heart swelling at the sight of a threatening tear. "Oh Master James, how I do admire your fortitude!" she smiled kindly at him. "When I have my eye on a pretty dress and I cannot find any coins, I am not half as brave as you are. I cry so loudly that I must be thrown from the shop!"

James laughed timidly at first, looking to his nurse for permission to enjoy this joke. Seeing his nurse wearing a relieved smile, he giggled and wiped his eyes.

“Oh but I do, James!” Evangeline continued, encouraged by the boy’s response. “My mother is so ashamed by my screaming and my crying that she will no longer take me shopping.”

James was delighted at the picture in his mind of this lady behaving in such a way.

“And do you know,” Evangeline retreated slightly and adopted an expression of mischief, “I stamp my feet, too – like this.” She raised her hem slightly and stamped both feet in succession, saying in a loud voice, “I want that dress *immediately!*”

James, his nurse and her youngest charge all laughed, the youngest child imitating Evangeline while Miss Nancy ‘shush’-ed and laughed at the same time. Evangeline bent down to the boy, one hand holding his and the other holding his chin so that their eyes were level with each other’s.

“I believe, Master James, that if one wants something very lovely very much, one should have it.” Evangeline reached into her purse and pressed a coin into the boy’s hand, curling his fingers around the coin. James looked startled for a moment, then looked down and opened his fist as if he suspected this lady of sorcery. Satisfied that the coin wouldn’t disappear, finally his whole face beamed with pleasure.

“Miss Nancy, Miss Nancy!” the boy shrieked, “I have some money! I can get some now!”

“Oh Miss, that is so kind of you.” The nurse seemed flustered. “Please, if you would give me your address, I will see that the money is returned to you.”

“Nonsense, it is a gift. I am in high spirits this morning Nancy, and I wish all to share my good feelings. A coin is as nothing! Good day to you all.” Evangeline fluttered her fingers at the baby and turned to James and held out her hand. “It was my pleasure to make your acquaintance, Master James. May life bring you many more coins and endless confectionery.”

James took her hand, looked shyly at Miss Nancy and shook Evangeline’s hand, which caused further giggling.

After a perusal of some shops and a cup of splendid Darjeeling tea at Fortnum & Mason's, Evangeline decided that she would return home for lunch; the perfect afternoon called for a good book. Not a romantic tragedy, which would wrench her heart and undo the morning's good work, or a serious tome intended to impart to the readers a grave lesson of moral importance. Indeed, nothing but one of her most grotesque tales would suffice, to sate Evangeline's appetite for indulging her senses.

The journey home on the omnibus, while too smelly and noisy for some ladies, was a source of much intrigue for Evangeline, enjoying as she sometimes did the transcending of her mind from her own life to that of her fellow passengers. The journey also rested her feet so that her mind could toil with more energy over the question of exactly which story she should read.

At home, she ran into the drawing room to greet her father and tell him of the wonderful morning she had enjoyed; she wished to tell him about the park, feeding the birds, meeting such lovely people, the lovely knick-knacks she had bought, and the fact that Fortnum & Mason's really do the best cup of tea in the capital and he simply must come with her one morning. She had expected to find his father with a newspaper, ready as always to lay this down and indulge her chatter. Instead, as she greeted her dog with a kiss, she found him laughing with a visitor. The man who turned to face her was Henry the doctor, who smiled almost apologetically in response to Evangeline's startled expression.

"Henry here was telling me that you had recently made each other's acquaintance not once, but twice," Mr. Gunn said.

Evangeline was surprised to note that her father seemed quite at ease with this stranger.

"Indeed, Papa, but I hope one of you will be kind enough to satisfy my curiosity as to the nature of this third encounter." Evangeline was studying her dog's reaction to their visitor. The Chow Chow seemed wary of Henry, yet she showed intermittent signs of affection.

Fergus caught something in the tone of his daughter's voice and wondered why she seemed defensive. He knew the doctor to have impeccable manners, so he could not imagine that he had offended Evangeline in any way.

“Henry had a quaint notion that I have managed to retain control of the parental reins,” Mr. Gunn chuckled at his own humour. “He wished to ask if I had any objection to asking you to the theatre.”

Evangeline turned to Henry with raised eyebrows. “You wish me to accompany you, Doctor?”

“Indeed I do, Miss Gunn. There is to be a performance nearby of many accomplished musicians, including Vladimir de Pachmann.”

Evangeline considered the invitation. “I have heard he is rather splendidly exuberant on the piano,” she said thoughtfully.

“Of course, if you would rather some drama, we could see Henry Irving as Hamlet.”

“Oh no,” she shuddered, “I have seen it, and I do not wish to see it again. It was brilliant, of course, but to see a man so completely taken over by such force of revenge and anger – well! I think my heart would give out. It does not do me good to see a person once so carefree and honourable become so enslaved to his worse nature.”

Fergus Gunn laughed in sympathy for poor Henry, whose steps on the path to courtship seemed stymied in their infancy.

Henry cleared his throat. “Perhaps there is some other performance you wish to see?”

Evangeline became animated. “Oh there is, we must go to the Opera Comique! My friend Daphne said she went to see *HMS Pinafore* and laughed for a week.”

Henry sat back in his chair with relief and slapped both arms of his chair as he smiled broadly. “It is settled, then. The success of our night depends on Mr. Gilbert and Mr. Sullivan.”

“I wonder at your energy, Henry,” Mr. Gunn said. “After all your recent charity engagements, I am surprised you are not falling asleep in front of our eyes.”

“Papa, have you met Henry before?”

“Indeed, child, your mother and I have discussed the good works of Henry during many a dinner conversation.”

Evangeline looked suddenly aghast at Henry. “*You* are the esteemed Dr. Jekyll?!”

Henry laughed, although not as loudly as Mr. Gunn. “I cannot tell whether you are pleasantly surprised or bitterly disappointed.”

Evangeline suddenly regretted her tone. “I apologise for my bad manners. I am pleasantly surprised, of course. I had no unfavourable impression of you, I merely always imagined someone more...well less...oh goodness, please let’s steer the conversation in another direction.”

Henry was rather enjoying this hitherto unseen side of Evangeline. He found this girlish, gauche side of her as charming as her more usually sophisticated and assured self.

“Actually, dear,” interjected Evangeline’s father, “it’s pronounced Jee-kill.”

“Oh father, not everything must be lent a Scottish lilt.”

Henry laughed. “Jee-kill is in fact the correct pronunciation.”

Evangeline regarded her suitor with a cool smile. “Well...I will understand perfectly if you have changed your mind, and would rather escort a lady of less verbal clumsiness to the theatre.”

“There is no other lady in London, clumsy or otherwise, I would rather take.”

Fergus Gunn watched Henry Jekyll watching his daughter. He sensed something different in Evangeline towards this suitor, something forceful and which made her self-conscious, which he had never seen before. He lit a pipe with the purpose of channelling his kaleidoscopic emotions into a bodily gesture. He had wished for this moment so many times, yet now the time had arrived he wished dearly for her to be once more his little Eva, clinging to his neck and kissing him violently, insisting she would love him for ever. In his dreams of the ideal gentleman for his daughter, he had not accounted for the nightmare of being deposed in his daughter’s affections.

Evangeline was momentarily oblivious to either gentleman, preferring to pour her affections onto her beloved dog. “Oh Biondetta, yes I love you, I love you. You’re a good girl.”

Feeling dispossessed by an animal and suddenly cold-shouldered by Mr. Gunn, Henry bade his polite goodbyes and took his leave. Evangeline noticed her father’s dejected stance and moved towards him. She kissed the top of his head and rested hers in the crook of his neck.

“You’re a good man too, Papa. I love you very much.”

CHAPTER FIVE

The concert had been interesting for Evangeline. Unlike any similar occasion she could recall, she had found herself keenly aware of her companion for most of the performance. Her memory could not present another person who had so piqued her curiosity and stimulated such depth of emotion. She considered herself, as did many of her friends and acquaintances, a mature and well-adjusted twenty-six year old. She did not subscribe to the view that a lady should be like her handkerchief: thin, white, somewhat diaphanous, limited in its use and hidden away until summoned for its prescribed role. Not only had travelling with her parents and a childhood spent outdoors as much as possible caused her skin to long ago lose its whiteness, but her appetite for life and for food ensured that she would never be capable of the fragile appearance demanded of a society lady. Evangeline thanked God again for her unconventional parents.

But a subtle discomfort had alighted on her. For the first time in her life she found herself wondering what a gentleman thought of her. Had this man seemed like most other men she suspected she would quite gaily go about as she always had done, safe in the knowledge that the people who mattered most thought she was wonderful. But this man seemed, at times, so unlike other men that she found herself wondering why he was so drawn to her. Her impatience with false modesty gave her no choice but to accept her beauty, presented to her both by her own mirror and by natural comparison with others of her species. This awareness had been endorsed countless times by reactions to the sight of her by members of both sexes. That Henry found her attractive was, for Evangeline, a moot point. Of course, she was glad that she had been born at the more desirable end of the attractiveness spectrum, but this was a double-edged sword. She had observed that a handsome man was not only appreciated for his looks, but people were inclined to listen more intently to what he had to say. A beautiful woman, by contrast, was something to be gazed at and admired, but forthright opinions or a monologue of substance could detract perilously from the favourable impression. Many a relationship bud had been nipped sharply by Evangeline when it was clear that she would be required only to sit as a doll on a shelf, performing the occasional twist of a parasol or a fluttering laugh at the appropriate moment. One insolent

suitor had actually put his finger to Evangeline's lips and whispered to her to be quiet. Naturally, when she threatened to bite his finger his opinion of her was reviewed, no threat needed to be fulfilled and the relationship was terminated.

She had awoken early and, having hours to spare before today's engagement, intended to read. But the concert a few nights ago was playing on her mind to the extent that she had attempted to read the same paragraph several times, each time the words having no relation to her thoughts. She simply could not stop thinking about Henry. She had found herself watching him intently, occasionally having to swiftly avert her eyes when he sensed himself being watched. It was as if he was unaware of his own responses until he realised that they had been noted by her. Of course, in the dim lights she couldn't say for certain that her perception of some expressions was accurate. The tightening of his lips and the clenching of his jaw could have been a play of light and shadow. The deliberate unclenching of his fist and splaying of his fingers might just have been to relieve stiff joints, or in unconscious response to something irritating about the performance. But he had unsettled her in a variety of ways and she needed to satisfy herself that he was not a challenge beyond her. Had she not fully admitted the fact to herself, the visible blush that now confronted her in her own mirror reminded her that she had felt aroused at the sight of his hands. They were large and attractive and she conceded that she would welcome *his* finger on her lips. The effect he seemed to have on her was out of proportion to how little she knew him. The answer, she had already decided, was to get to know him.

Henry had awoken with the first glint of sunlight at the window. He immersed himself in his current chemical conundrum for a few hours until his thoughts and his appetite for breakfast forced him to break from his work. He ate and drank mechanically, his mind eager to keep conjuring the vision of Evangeline. Of course, she was very beautiful; if his appearance had not been of a similar standard, he would have felt undermined. As it was, he knew that he was appealing to women; he had in abundance all which he knew a lady would be looking for. Indeed, his problem was not what to advertise, but what to edit. Admittedly, Evangeline's beauty was what he found initially arresting, but she was by no means the first exquisite creature to catch his eye. He saw in her something he had seen in no other woman. In fact she had stirred memories of Lydia, but the comparison warranted no more than a fleeting pang. Far from a faded memory, his picture of Evangeline was vivid

and animated. Each encounter with her had felt to Henry as an accidental splash of cold water on a hot day: momentarily shocking but ultimately refreshing. She seemed to him something vitally substantial in an atmosphere of wisps and mists. Although he couldn't convincingly deny that she brought out in him a degree of wariness, he was drawn to her self-assurance and her openness. Paradoxically, the thing that made him wary was also the thing that pleased him the most. Among his past lovers, those who showed an independence of spirit and who would not have required looking after and a knowledge of his work only in order to participate in the competitive gossip of wives, were those who under no circumstances could be publicly acknowledged as his companion. On the other hand, the more acceptable of his consorts had cast before him visions of years of comfortable boredom and predictability, a lifetime of polite dinner parties and domestic ennui, culminating in a pair of matching headstones. Evangeline, on the other hand, was a rare mix of respectability and individuality. She was a companion worthy of his social standing but clearly not in need of being constantly reassured and petted. Her curiosity about his work would not be motivated from insecurity. Indeed, he dared to hope that her apparent intellect and boldness of opinion indicated a mind as open and inquiring, as lacking in fearful reverence, as his own. His next thought made him smile; he felt confident enough to risk the speculation that she would be charmed in sufficient measure to take a keen interest in his ambitions, but she was independent in sufficient measure to keep her own interests. And although it was probably not to be admitted among his friends at various clubs, it was a personal requirement that someone he would consider sharing a future with should be a source of stimulation, someone who would meet him intellectually, surprise him on occasion, grasp the essence of his philosophical musings. And, of course, as much as *she* would expect certain traits in a potential father, he did not welcome the idea, as so many men seemed to, of an empty-headed dunce raising his children. Whichever potentially undesirable traits which Henry was conveniently overlooking for his own part were clouded by lust, yet he thought himself enough of a prize and capable, to satisfactory levels, of drawing a cloak over the less savoury parts of himself so that he could be someone's husband, provided that someone was right. Not that he was on the threshold of a marriage proposal at this stage, but the combination of his age, a certain emptiness of late (the cause of which, it had been suggested by a female acquaintance, may be due to a lack of intimacy), and the persistent feeling that he would regret allowing Evangeline to be snared

by another fellow, meant that he found himself, for the first time in his life, considering this option. Therefore, although he felt suitably in control and thought he was approaching the situation in much the same way as he conducted his scientific research, he did not allow for the fact that he was as much subject to the more elementary human instincts as the common fellows who swept his chimney and shined his shoes. In fact these men were no doubt at an advantage in this regard, allowing themselves the freedom to admit to the more primitive aspects of mankind. Henry, by contrast, spent a great deal of energy in a futile exercise of attempting to attach a more civilised and noble basis to all his thinking and behaviour. Whatever resisted any such analysis was something to be puzzled over. Consequently, the more he tried to rationalise his baser self, the more his natural, instinctive desires pulsed in his blood with a distracting intensity. And try as he would to ignore the effect his desire for Evangeline had on him, the more his treacherous mind seemed to stoke the coals of lustful fantasy and conjure up stirring images. From her hair to her neck, to her voice, to the way her face tilted upwards and her brow arched whenever she was about to verbally pounce, Henry found himself excited by every aspect of her which his memory threw at him. He decided it would be prudent to spend the remaining time diffusing his ardour by concentrating again on the present chemical dilemma in which he felt so close to proving his theories. And the sooner he did so, the sooner he could quieten his pedantic friend Hastie Lanyon.

After an hour, Poole informed Henry that his picnic was ready. His cab took him to Regent's Park, where he waited for his next encounter with Evangeline Gunn. A short while later he heard:

“Well, doctor, I hope you have packed a sufficiently abundant picnic, my appetite is particularly large today.”

He had expected to be kept waiting a good deal longer; women seemed to use the anticipation of men as a favourite weapon in their rather limited arsenal. He briefly wondered if this capacity of Evangeline's to usurp his assumptions was to be a frequent occurrence. Shielding his eyes from the sun, he realised that each occasion for their meetings was as if he had laid eyes on her for the first time. The green of her eyes today reminded him of a cat, simultaneously uncomplicated yet demanding. There was a promise

of a smile on her lips, as if she knew how he desired her and how his attempt at any mastery over it was futile. Or was it that she delighted in saying things she knew very well to be unfeminine? Perhaps she manufactured certain facial expressions in order to draw attention to her features. He noticed the supple fullness of her mouth, something he hadn't been able to fully appraise on their previous meetings due to the torrent of words coming from it and his attention therefore fixated on other, more sedentary, features. He wanted to draw his fingers along this mouth, to kiss it lustfully, to press his mouth hard against hers, to cause the lips to redden with blood and with the shame of passion.

"Yes," he murmured in a low tone.

A derisive laugh from Evangeline roused Henry from his reverie. "You cannot possibly have stopped listening to what I say after so few occasions of having to hear it." Her lips were pursed in disapproval, her brow arched, yet Henry detected humour in her eyes.

"My profuse apologies, Miss Gunn, most impolite of me. I hope you accept my explanation that my momentary lapse of attention was due to laborious tasks which demand much of my time, and not at all a negative judgement upon your company." His smile was disarming to the point of causing a momentary lapse of attention on the part of Evangeline, yet she was determined to keep her attraction to him in the proper place and to ascertain whether or not he would, in her mother's words, "treat my princess like the queen."

"Just what sort of laborious tasks take up so much of your time, doctor?"

"May I be so bold as to suggest that 'doctor' now sounds too impersonal?"

"I will call you Henry on the condition that you dispose with 'Miss Gunn'," she smiled.

"I do prefer the sound of 'Evangeline.' And it is a beautiful name." Again, the disarming smile.

She felt something; a shadowy, reptilian sense that a threshold had just been crossed. This feeling was unfamiliar to her, an excitement so palpable she could not distinguish it from fear. And yet she wanted to run not away from him, but towards him. She felt like an animal: instinctive, vigilant, her senses alert. Turning her head, she hoped with all her will that she had not given any untoward signals which betrayed her thoughts. She had not been brought up to believe that only men had the capacity for desire, nevertheless she had a sense of propriety. She looked at some children playing, two elderly ladies discussing the arrival of Cleopatra's Needle on the Embankment, a noisy duck fight. Her equilibrium regained, she turned again towards Henry. He was watching her with an intensity that resisted interpretation. No doubt some ladies would have found his expression Byronic, but Evangeline saw something pleading, something lost. She wondered if she had read too many mysteries, perhaps this was the reason behind her wishing to understand this enigmatic gentleman. Although he was a good deal older than her, he suddenly made her feel as if she needed to comfort him. What alchemy was this, surely not what naïve girls mistook for love, or even affection? Perhaps this was why women married when they had barely waved goodbye to girlhood. Better to rush into marriage than to yield to their impulses and become sullied and without the protection of a respectable marriage. Goodness, she was quite tired from all this strain on her mental faculties. She told herself to relax and enjoy a leisurely afternoon in the company of a handsome man.

"But Henry," she tapped his arm gently, "you did not answer my question about your laborious tasks."

"Indeed I didn't. Which laborious tasks would you like to hear about?"

She laughed. "All of them! I know you are a doctor, and, as you know, my parents frequently discuss your good works. It's a wonder you have time to be sitting on park benches."

Henry smiled. "My work is my life, and of course it behoves someone of my standing to help the afflicted, but life would be very dull if I had no time left for sitting in the park with the most absorbing woman in the capital."

Evangeline tried to adopt an arch expression before a grin smashed through the façade. Oh, this would not do, she must not wilt so easily.

“Who needs an equally absorbing man who is not in the habit of swatting her questions away, as one does a summer insect.”

Henry laughed. She was no common summer insect, but a scorpion. Fascinating and exotic to look at, with a quick, sharp sting. Careful handling was what was required. Treatment to gain trust, affection and loyalty so that the difference and danger remained for everyone but he who had tamed her. Yes, he had the masculinity and intellect to appreciate what good fortune had sent his way, but also the deftness of mind and experience not to assume that such a woman would not attempt to outwit him at every turn.

“The work which has brought me wealth and solid professional reputation is medicine. I also advise on a number of boards and my charity work supports several causes and organisations.”

“I see.” Evangeline appraised her companion with a cool look before her whole face seemed to soften. “In that case, you are forgiven any lapses in attention. But only minor ones.”

Henry made a deferential gesture and tried to look suitably abashed. “You are most gracious, my lady.”

“Not so gracious as to permit it to happen too often,” she smiled. “Tell me, Henry, are there any women in your area of medicine, or any who sit on the same boards or work for your charities?”

“I know of some women who have roles within the charitable organisations. There are none on the boards, or ladies of medicine. Why do you ask?”

“I have observed that women remain outside of many important roles, for which they are more than suitable. For myself, I believe I could be of enormous use to our community in a charitable capacity.”

“Indeed.” Henry considered this. “I don’t think women are interested in chemical and scientific experiments.”

"You don't?" Evangeline's eyebrows rose in amazement. "Then you must think Mrs. Garrett Anderson a perfect oddity. Yet, her students are by no means exclusively male." She waited for Henry to respond, but his only reaction was a sequence of sounds about which the only statement can be made is that they were non-committal.

"What you say is remarkable, Henry," Evangeline continued. "I am quite sure I have spent more time in the company of women than yourself and yet I cannot recall a single occasion when one woman expressed her aversion to medicine or to science. To the contrary, many of us express a good deal of interest in matters of scientific enquiry."

Henry was used to being challenged by such as Lanyon, but never had a woman challenged him since the days when Lydia would argue with him ceaselessly; she did not wish to go to school anyway, since they were heavily biased in favour of everything to do with boys. All that Greek and all that Latin was enough to make children think that women had never taken up the pen or voiced an opinion. He shook his head in irritation and smiled indulgently at Evangeline.

"I did not mean to suggest that women in medicine are an oddity, merely that it is more a male interest. By all means, women are needed in medicine. One only has to think of the splendid support of Florence Nightingale in the Crimean."

"I rather think I wouldn't be a very good nurse. Women don't always want to support, you see, women sometimes want to lead." She fixed an intense stare on Henry, but his expression gave nothing away. Yet Evangeline suddenly brightened, "but you inspire me Henry! I could travel to distant lands and tribes *and* be a woman of medicine."

"You surprise me," Henry said, eyeing her with something akin to suspicion and despondency. How could he expect to know and love anyone else, he admonished himself, when he had proved to himself that one could spend a lifetime hiding one's traits from even the closest of friends. Then again, someone like Utterson, he was sure, was not a multiplicity of conflicting tendencies. What was presented in public was more or less identical to Utterson's private persona, of that Henry was quite certain. This thought gave him fresh cheer; Evangeline was candid enough to persuade Henry that she too had no unfathomable depths, no impenetrably dark psyche.

“Oh dear,” Evangeline searched Henry’s face, “please assure me that, in spite of your admirable qualities, you are not one of those men who thinks that certain paths in life are customarily closed to that part of society whose destiny is decided by their sex. Or, heaven forbid, that the only profession permitted is the *oldest* profession.” Instead of the expected defence of his position, for which Evangeline had a solid counterattack, she was quite shocked to see a look of sadness pass momentarily over Henry’s face, before a benign smile drew across like a theatre curtain.

“We are all subject to certain contingencies when it comes to destiny and our sex,” was Henry’s resigned reply. His tone betrayed an unconscious note of rehearsal.

Evangeline recoiled slightly. She didn’t know whether she was more indignant at his apparent ignorance, or outraged on his behalf that something had constructed such a monstrous prison of apathy in his soul. She turned herself fully towards him in preparation for a debate which she simply had to win. “Henry I will allow you the fact that certain things in life are undoubtedly dictated by the sex you are born into. But I must insist that these are actually very few in number and that most things in life are available whether we are a man or a woman. Or, if not, they certainly *should* be available.” She stamped a clenched fist on her knee.

“Indeed...of course.” Henry rubbed his chin thoughtfully and had a wary look in his eyes.

“I must eat, I am feeling ravenous,” Evangeline declared. She simply could not debate effectively on an empty stomach.

They began to eat and for a few silent moments Evangeline wondered to what extent Henry’s life had been governed by restrictions, and Henry wondered to what extent he could demonstrate to Evangeline his theories. After all, she had spoken of an interest in medicine. He was prepared to shelve this particular line of discussion for the sake of an agreeable afternoon, but Evangeline’s nature was such that once her spirit was troubled it must seek a path towards calming waters. But she did not want to appear as if she wished to entrap him, as a rat catcher in vicious pursuit of the city’s vermin. Yet she could not

entertain the idea of further encounters with a man who wished to place her in a small box marked 'woman.' She must therefore be canny (as her father would say) in her probing.

"Now, apart from ensuring you save some time to spend with absorbing women, what other activities do you engage in for leisure?"

"Absorbing, disputatious women are my most interesting pursuit. Every other is of the ordinary sort: company for dinners, reading and the like. And what of you? What absorbs the absorbing?"

"I must take issue with your mention of reading in the category of 'ordinary' pursuits, for that is one of my most engaging. But I also enjoy outdoor pursuits."

"Such as?"

"I ride horses, I fly my bird. I enjoy fencing, I –"

"Fencing?" Henry had inadvertently leaned towards Evangeline, his voice louder than he intended.

"Oh," Evangeline laughed softly, "I quite forget at times that my family is not what one may think of as ordinary."

"Well..." Henry considered this, "what exactly is ordinary? By definition, it seems to mean like everyone else. But what if everyone else is wrong? Who, then, would want to be ordinary?"

"I rather think that the ordinary ones are very dull. Yet it would seem that many who would otherwise be unusual are not so brave as to state that they are in fact right and the world is wrong."

"Yet you seem to me a person who would be prepared to state such a declaration. I imagine you would offer your exquisite neck to the noose for the right cause."

"Do you indeed? How very stupid I would be to do such a thing," she smiled at Henry. "Do you fence?"

Henry laughed. "I do not. I did, however, ride horses in my younger days."

"Splendid!" We must ride together one day. That would widen your rather dull pastime repertoire."

"Indeed," Henry laughed, "I could perhaps hire a fencing instructor so we can duel with swords and not words."

"Oh, but I could teach you. I am rather good, you know, my mother taught me."

"I imagine you are. In fact, I imagine you are good at everything you want to be good at."

Evangeline was not sure if his tone was one of admiration or mockery. Perhaps it was both. Yet she cared not; she found him pleasing company. And that devilishly disarming smile.

"And you mentioned flying your bird? I assume it's a bird of prey, and not a finch or some such other type?"

"She's a hawk. Her name is Morrigan and she is rather magnificent."

Henry smiled with resigned awe. "Wild, but tamed. Soaring, but grounded. I can see the parallels." He felt an unfamiliar sensation of enjoying feeling out of his depth.

"It's an unusual name, did you choose it?"

"I did. I think it means something like 'phantom queen.' But it can also mean 'monster in female form,' according to an article by William Hennessey. Naturally, I hope your parallels don't stretch to *that* comparison," she laughed as she bit into some bread and honey. "This is excellent honey, I must say."

"My aunt keeps bees and insists on sending honey, among other produce."

"Well, she makes delicious honey." Evangeline closed her eyes for a few moments. "It really is heavenly. Extremely violet."

Henry frowned. "I beg your pardon?"

Evangeline opened her eyes with a start. "Oh dear, I do sometimes forget myself. I must explain. My senses are linked I suppose, therefore I see and hear colours. It's rather difficult to explain but I've found that to be the best explanation."

Henry was fascinated. "Do you see and hear colours all the time? Are you not overwhelmed?"

Evangeline laughed. "I have never known life without it. It is merely a kink, not an inconvenience."

Henry conceded the statement with a smile and from then on the afternoon passed easily, with many opinions, aspirations and hopes exchanged, though Henry was the more cautious of the two with his candour. It seemed that whenever a window was thrown open too wide to allow a view into his soul, as gust of mistrust would slam it shut. Now that she knew him better, Evangeline was tempted to blame his professional conditioning and ever-present awareness of his social standing. She had faith in her ability to thaw his self-inflicted tension, however, and she found herself optimistic for their next meeting.

A sudden and violent onset of rain and wind interrupted the easy chatter and their rendezvous came to a natural end. Henry insisted on taking Evangeline home, where once again she tried and failed to lose herself in a fictitious mystery.

CHAPTER SIX

Evangeline would look back on the years to come and see her younger self as one with fewer layers but more optimism and innocence. One may say that this is the fate of all, yet the shock of the steep fall (or climb) was felt as a cruel blow rather than a natural process of life.

For now, though, the road before her appeared fresh and untrammelled, as new snow inviting the footprints of her life. On the one hand, Henry had eased into her life in a quite unremarkable way, with all the usual trimmings of a relationship which deepens. On the other hand, he had caused a seismic internal shift for Evangeline, who would lay her head on her pillow at night and suddenly feel quite overcome with the knowledge that she had decided on a quite permanent companion in such an unequivocal fashion. This must be what happens when one grows up, she thought with a self-satisfied sadness.

Those who knew Evangeline were quite surprised at her romantic choice. To them the doctor was serious, rather aloof, and had a somewhat apprehensive but entrenched manner. They assumed that she would be drawn to someone who reflected her qualities: open, egalitarian, cheery, and endearingly capricious, with an almost permanent air of enthusiasm. But Evangeline had a vain side and she rather relished the thought that only she could summon the lighter sides of Henry; only she was worth of being allowed to discover the treasures in the cave. After all, who would value a companion who was wont to indiscriminately bestow upon the world his talents and innermost thoughts? No, indeed, Evangeline thoroughly enjoyed having all to herself the real Henry. Besides, they did not see the wonderful colours she saw when he laughed with her.

Months were spent in what Henry felt to be the happiest days of his life, as near to carefree as he could muster. He had, at last, met a woman who encompassed everything he had wished for in a companion: young, exquisite in form, with an enquiring nature, a zest for life, and an appreciation of his work and talents. He had been quite prepared for the life of a bachelor; in fact it had suited him rather well. Indeed, many had been the conversations between he and certain friends, Gabriel Utterson included, which recommended a life without the ceaseless chatter and complaints about the cook that their married friends had to endure. Yet Henry was not prepared to allow Evangeline to pass through his life and

become a fond memory. He was not so tasteless, as were some fellows, as to be incapable of distinguishing a true gem from mere paste. Even at the height of his lust for a woman, or the peak of interest in her nature, Henry felt that the term 'permanent fixture' should only ever apply to a servant or a piece of furniture. Yet when he thought of the term 'temporary' in connection with Evangeline, he felt something akin to horror.

And so it was that, after several seasons of deep acquaintance and mutual joy in each other's company, Henry sensed that Evangeline was becoming restless as she looked towards the horizon of her future. Quite simply, he needed her to stay in his life. Yet he knew that she needed to make her mark on the world. How like him, he thought, to fall in love with a woman whose dream was not to find someone to look after her and to live out her days in domestic preoccupation. But for her charm and beauty, many of his friends considered her to be a locomotive of dangerous potential. Which, for Henry, was one of those charms. Which in turn meant that he must strike quickly and state his intentions.

On a temperate day in April, Henry sat waiting for Evangeline, preparing in his mind for the possibility of a negative outcome. This, he felt, was one of his strengths, and the result of many years of pragmatic acceptance of failed results and disappointing experiments. Fergus Gunn was an amiable man but not given to open expression, except among his family. Henry had hoped that, having asked Mr. Gunn for his daughter's hand in marriage, her acceptance would be hinted at. But Fergus merely muttered his assent with an amused smile and an addendum to the effect that Henry must be prepared for both outcomes and not consider his blessing as a guarantee. Henry had been careful not to appear desperate, but he gently pushed Fergus for a hint, appealing to a father's vanity that he knew him to be privy to his daughter's hopes and wishes. He also hoped that Fergus would sympathise with his male pride.

"I would be grateful to know whether or not I am a whim or an older man who is indulging in flights of fancy," he had smiled, not altogether comfortable with this obsequiousness. But Fergus Gunn was not a man to be flattered into an orgy of platitudes, as Henry should have guessed. His smile faded but a look of something close to pity appeared in his eyes.

"I can see you are more than suitable as a husband and you have every quality and asset desirable to a father-in-law. Yet I would guess that you have spent enough time in the company of my daughter to know that she is given more to being politic than polite." Fergus shrugged as if the subject had already bored him. Henry felt that something of the savage Celt remained in Mr. Gunn. A younger man may have been intimidated by him.

Arturo entered the room and greeted Henry. "Father, have you seen a book I left here?"

"I haven't, but that's not to say it wasn't here. Amelia has been unusually spirited lately in her tidying."

"Oh, I doubt Amelia would have picked it up. It's the sort of thing she would pretend not to see." He winked at Henry.

Fergus Gunn turned his head slowly to look at his son. His expression was wary, reflecting a foreboding sense of needing to conjure a suitable reprimand whilst knowing the effort would be regretted.

Evangeline appeared, her radiance a fresh shock to his system. He could conjure in his mind at any moment a perfectly replicated vision of her and yet with each encounter Henry felt a mild current of energy and a thrilling frisson of anticipation. On this occasion the pleasurable sensation was tinged with anxiety as he prepared himself for the possibility of having to erase from his mind all the pleasures he had gained, and all those he had foreseen in their future.

"Dear Henry," she smiled down at him, "you look not in the slightest put out that I have kept you waiting, you are a perfect gentleman."

"For the sight that has greeted me, I would wait a good deal longer," Henry returned her smile. "I would not have thought it possible, but your eyes are shining even more than usual." She was resplendent in an effulgence of emerald green silk which made a magnificent foil for the Titian splendour of her hair.

"Ah then, my eyes are treacherous. I have reached a particularly thrilling part of the story I told you about." She sat in the chair opposite Henry with a slight frown. "I must say, however, that if things proceed in the way of my suspicions, I will not be at all pleased."

Henry had leaned forward and was holding his chin in his hand with a finger pressed vertically against his lips as he perused the object of his intentions. He wasn't at all sure that he had been wise in his assumptions that there would be a natural pause in which to introduce his proposal.

"In fact," Evangeline continued, but stopped abruptly when she noticed Henry's expression. "Are you quite all right, Henry?"

"Yes, my darling." Henry straightened in his chair. "I'm slightly fatigued and the warmth of the room is somewhat soporific."

"Shall I open a window?"

"Permit me," he smiled and started to rise from the chair.

Evangeline was already standing and she made a dismissive motion with her hand. "Really, Henry, a woman can open her own windows."

Objections such as these often caught Henry unawares; was he really so unaccustomed to the social progress of women? This philosophical question was abruptly halted by the vision of Evangeline's tilting body. Henry's breathing had slowed as he imagined himself pressed against her, one hand covering hers as she steadied herself against the window frame, his other hand exploring the contours of her hips. As she turned, he felt flooded with shame. It was not proper to think of her in the same way as he imagined cavorting with a Nelly or a Mary at The Ten Bells or The Regents Tavern. Henry wished fervently for a solution by which he could be rid of such depravity. He vowed to give more attention to his most pressing experiment as a matter of some urgency. He could not forgive himself if his worse half were the cause for losing Evangeline. As she sat down, he moved to her, took her hand in his and kissed it softly.

"My dearest Evangeline," he began with a solemn expression.

"My dearest doctor," she interrupted, taking both of Henry's hands in her own, "you look quite comically tragic, I cannot possibly take you seriously with such a theatrical expression."

For a moment Henry's anger flashed. Damn this untamed female, must she never react the way one ought in certain situations? Yet with his next breath he laughed. He must indeed have looked ridiculous. And of what lasting interest would be a predictable woman?

"Are you confident that my tidings are not in fact tragic?"

"I have quite a sense for tragedy and today has so far held no tragic omens," she stated with a steady gaze. Her chin tilted in defiance as she asked, "What fresh proposition hides behind that inscrutable face?"

"Not a proposition, merely a confirmation to myself that you really must be the most self-assured woman in the country."

"Ah," Evangeline acknowledged with a quiet laugh. "Well, at least you have allowed that my best qualities extend beyond the capital." Her brow arched and a triumphant smile appeared. "Now, my darling," she clapped her hands on her lap, "if you are going to play the departing innamorato, I must warn you that I will neither faint nor weep, for I can assure you that I will be perfectly contented until your return."

"Indeed," Henry drew breath to begin a new sentence, but he realised that he had no idea of what he intended to say. "Really, Evangeline, you sometimes confound me more than my experiments."

Evangeline laughed. "I merely wished to tell you beforehand that, should you have prepared a speech informing me in dramatic tones of your departure on some epic voyage, or some such other devastating news, I will accept the news and wave you off in a manner designed to lighten your heart and lift your countenance." She smiled and kissed his hand playfully.

Henry laughed, despite his increasing frustration. "I see, yes, very considerate of you, but also very unnecessary as my situation is entirely the opposite." He began to wonder if a guessing game may in fact be the ideal way to facilitate the delivery of his proposal.

"Ah," Evangeline appraised her companion, nodding slowly, "you see, you are equally confounding because your countenance tends toward grave, even when it should reflect frivolity."

It was best sometimes, Henry thought, that a grave countenance masked the effects on him of Evangeline's teasing. Indeed, he noted, there were occasions when grave countenances and a certain frivolity were fitting bedfellows.

"Oh dear, you are not trying to tell me that you have no opportunity of going away? Are you to be incarcerated?" Evangeline did so enjoy teasing him.

"Well," Henry's face blossomed into a smile, a fortuitous opportunity presenting itself, "whether or not incarceration is involved would depend on my perception and your conduct in the course of our marital life together." He witnessed something he was quite sure was the first occasion for such an event: Evangeline went quite still. His smile slowly evaporated and he discovered that he had betrayed himself, for he hadn't in fact prepared himself at all for the eventuality of a refusal.

Evangeline blinked sharply as if to prompt an answer from herself. She cocked her head at a precarious angle and regarded Henry with a look which seemed to him alarmingly dispassionate and analytical.

"Henry. Darling, did you just ask me to be your wife?"

"Indeed, no," he smiled, running a finger round his collar.

Evangeline smiled slowly; the territory of the heart was not easy to navigate for this man of science. Had she been the one to propose, the task would have been accomplished so much more efficiently. Of course, she was thrilled but she hadn't been expecting a proposal until much later in the year. She loved him, she was sure, but there was still so much she felt they didn't know of each other. No matter, she supposed, after all that was surely partly the purpose of an engagement.

"But I intended to," Henry said softly.

"Oh Henry," Evangeline laughed loudly before clapping a hand to her mouth. "I completely ruined your planned speech, didn't I?" She laughed again, a burst of even more strength as she watched Henry doing his very best to appear amused. "Darling, I am sorry, would you like to ask me in the manner you intended and I will act perfectly properly?"

He laughed at her with incredulity, throwing his hands in the air. "I would much prefer that you put me out of my misery immediately." He put his head in his hand and rubbed his forehead. "This is assuredly not the conversation I had anticipated." He laughed again.

Evangeline rose from her chair and sat on the rug by Henry's feet, taking his hands in her own. She looked into his eyes, smiling gently and noting again the now familiar indecipherable expression behind them. "Dear Henry, I do so complicate matters, I know. But a man like you would find a woman who was unlike me quite tedious, I'm sure."

Henry smiled, stroked her cheek, and chuckled. "You have every reason to be sure."

Evangeline pressed her cheek against his hand and closed her eyes for a few moments. When she opened them Henry was surprised to see tears. His heart felt oppressive within his chest and he knew now that if she refused him his whole life would change, for nothing could be how it had been.

"I cannot promise that I will put you out of your misery," she began, tears brimming onto her cheeks, despite her bright smile. She placed a hand on his cheek and continued, "because I am not the sort of woman who will change her behaviour and become docile once we are married."

Henry had closed his eyes as if to obliterate everything before him. For a few seconds, they had remained closed, his response impervious to Evangeline's touch. His eyes almost jumped open and he searched her face as if trying to recall who she was. His lips parted in surprise and he leapt from his chair, pulling Evangeline to her feet and enveloping her in his arms. At last his emotions overwhelmed him and he tasted his own tears as he kissed her hair, her eyes, her cheeks, her mouth, repeating as a chant: "I don't *want* you to change."

Evangeline disentangled herself, holding Henry's hands and regarding him with concern. "You are trembling, Henry, I will send for some tea."

"Tea be damned, woman, you will send for some Scotch," Henry breathed, causing them both to laugh. He lifted her from the floor and spun round, laughing with relief. Evangeline was soon squealing with delight, which brought the maid bursting through the door with a look of alarm.

"Oh, Miss," she breathed when she realised there was no danger. She slumped and placed a hand dramatically against her chest. "I'm sorry, I thought you had come to some harm." Aware of the doctor's amused expression, she blushed and fumbled behind her for the door knob, mumbling something about not bothering them again.

"Oh, but I *have* come to some harm, Amelia." Evangeline adopted a serious expression. "My heart has been brutally captured and violently seized." She sat in the chair in a most inelegant manner, kicking her legs and laughing.

Henry's sense of propriety was too ingrained to unleash his spirits in this context. He stifled a laugh and cleared his throat. "My apologies for the alarm we caused you, Amelia. Would you bring a pot of tea for Miss Gunn?"

"Yes of course sir," nodded Amelia, already nearly out of the room.

"And some Scotch, please Amelia," added Evangeline.

"Of course Miss."

When the door was closed, Henry raised his brows and Evangeline gasped in imitation of Amelia's embarrassment.

"We must make plans for our marriage so I can be assured in my mind that you will not have a change of heart," Henry said, sitting down with a smile that disguised the anxiety behind his statement.

"Henry, you do me a disservice. I am not so inconstant to accept such a proposal without my whole heart and soul consenting to such a commitment."

Henry felt humbled, a sensation he did not usually permit to take hold of him. "Of course, my darling." He took hold of her hand and kissed it with an apology. "The unity of your heart, soul and mind is what makes me love you."

Evangeline laughed. "May your apologies be always so full, so chivalrous and so eloquent, even when the bloom of youth and romance are both faded memories."

“I am overjoyed that you have agreed to be my wife, so for this reason I will overlook the disservice you now do to me by the implication that our romance is in part due to your youth.”

Evangeline smiled. “We must desist from apologising to each other with such frequency, for I intend to spend a lot of time with my husband and I will become quite bored of hand kissing. Now,” she clapped her hands, “my heart, soul and mind are united in the feeling that I would like some tea and I would like to discuss our plans.” She looked out of the window and uttered an “oh!” with such alarm that Henry drew alongside her to see the cause of her surprise.

“I must have a garden, Henry,” she said with such earnestness that Henry burst into laughter.

He tilted her chin towards his face and kissed her lips. “Of course you must,” he said. Not for the first or last time did his conflicted nature ask whether he wished to tame her or whether he wanted her to show him how to be wild and free.

CHAPTER SEVEN

"Hmm," Evangeline turned over the name in her mind. "Evangeline Jekyll."

Henry frowned in mock concern, "Is one of the terribly tragic heroines of your grim tales named so?"

Evangeline disregarded his teasing. "I rather like my name. I spent my childhood wishing my surname was more exotic, and just as I am grown accustomed to it, I am to lose it." Her tone was not complaining, but wistful.

Henry sat next to her, taking her hand and kissing it. "Come, don't let such a trifle play on your mind or spoil our mood. It is such a beautiful day, why do we not go somewhere?"

She smiled weakly. "Yes, I suppose we could."

Henry's face twitched slightly but he felt that to say something would be ill-advised. Rather like attempting to take a stick from a dog's mouth when the dog is not ready to relinquish.

They went out and the morning's conversation was forgotten. After a pleasant lunch, the couple went for a stroll in St. James's Park, comfortably arm-in-arm. They passed the bird keeper's cottage and Evangeline's hearty wave was returned by a small man with a smiling face whom Henry thought, by the striking resemblance, had spent a little too long in the company of his feathered charges. He wondered how much of the night-time activities of the park the man had enjoyed, but dismissed the thought quickly.

"Would you not agree?" Henry prompted, when Evangeline made no response to his previous statement.

She made a sound of vague agreement and was brought back to the present moment when Henry asked "Are you still troubled?"

She brought her eyes down from the tree-tops. "Oh goodness, no. You must forget that, as I have. I'm ashamed to say I have not the slightest idea about what you were asking, was it terribly important?"

Henry laughed, “not terribly, no. What has so captured your attention that you missed my insignificant musings?”

“I was thinking about tree climbing,” she smiled.

“They are far too high for you,” Henry teased.

“It sounds like a rather frivolous daydream, I know, but was slightly concerned that I cannot remember precisely when I *stopped* climbing trees. And *why*.”

Despite her rather grave countenance, Henry could not help laughing.

Evangeline stopped walking and turned to Henry. “Whatever is so amusing?”

Henry paused for a few moments, aware of the trap he had laid before himself. “I’m not entirely sure,” he said quietly. After all, what *had* she said that was so amusing?

Evangeline detected an almost imperceptible shift in Henry’s stance and a more visible shift manifested on his face. He uttered a name in an absent-minded tone.

“Who’s that?” Evangeline’s voice disguised a leap of discomfort inside her. Would that not be an unfortunate irony, to be as one of the unfortunate damsels in her gothic tales? Could there be a long-hidden wife, deranged and unhinged by a tragic, unrequited love for her handsome husband? Would she wander along the passageways of her marital home to be greeted by the sight of Henry’s mad former wife?

Henry looked startled for a moment before he smiled and offered again his arm to Evangeline. “I think it was the mental image of your hair and skirts tangled in a tree. You must have been quite the conundrum for your mother and father.”

Evangeline smiled but would not be diverted. “Not at all, they took great pride in my bravery and agility. Who is Lydia?”

“Pardon?”

“You said ‘Lydia.’ Who is she?”

Henry stopped abruptly, and when he turned to face Evangeline she noticed that he appeared quite flushed, as he said "Why are you asking me this?" He seemed to be struggling to hide the fact that he was upset.

"What do you mean Henry? A moment ago you were laughing at the thought of me climbing trees, then you said "Lydia," and I asked you who she is. Why else would I be asking you? Whatever is wrong?"

Henry composed himself, looked at the ground for a moment, then smiled at Evangeline in a rather formal fashion. He offered his arm once more and Evangeline took it tentatively. They walked in silence for a few steps until Henry said, in a quiet voice, "she is my sister."

Evangeline turned her head towards him and, had Henry mirrored her action, he would have seen the surprise in her face. But he wished neither to turn his head towards her nor see the surprise on her face. He was not at all pleased with the direction in which the conversation was heading.

Evangeline slowly turned her head away from Henry. There was no reason why she should know everything about him, of course, but it felt odd that, until now, she knew nothing of the existence of a sibling.

"I had forgotten," Henry gave a forced smile, "she too used to climb trees."

"Ah," Evangeline's smile was knowing, "another spirit who refused to keep within the confines of her sex."

Henry looked at her as if he was trying to solve some sort of encrypted message and Evangeline began to wonder if an imminent fever threatened. What else could explain his somewhat bizarre, detached behaviour? At last he turned to face ahead as they continued walking, but his expression remained troubled.

"Well, I very much look forward to meeting your sister. I have a wonderful brother in Arturo but I would have loved a sister too. When will I meet her? I expect she is very beautiful, is she not?" She turned her head and regarded Henry expectantly, but his expression was distant.

"A meeting is unlikely to take place," he told her in a resigned voice.

"Oh. But that is tragic. May I know the reason?"

"She lives quite far away."

"Henry, we are both seasoned travellers, this should not preclude a visit." He said nothing, so she continued, "just how far away *does* she live? I sincerely hope she will attend our wedding."

A heavy sigh came from Henry. "My dear, that will not be possible. It is not merely the distance, she lives - she is not..." he sighed once more, "she is quite unwell."

"I see," was all Evangeline said, while she gathered her thoughts. But Henry was learning that the more silences and gaps he created, the more Evangeline would attempt to mine them for information with which to refill the unsatisfactory voids.

"Who takes care of her? And must we not visit because she is unwell? I would like to meet her, Henry, because she is your sister. I am not an unsullied flower, you must not think of me as one who must be protected from the world's woes." She squeezed his arm, hoping that this would lighten his mood and loosen his tongue.

Henry merely offered her a perfunctory smile, but she was not to be thrown off her path.

"No, you do by now know me better than that. I am too worldly to be categorised as such. So, then, I see no reason why we cannot visit her, and quite soon. I would like to at least know that we would have wished her to witness our marriage."

Henry's sigh was the heaviest yet, and Evangeline was starting to feel impatient. "Really, Henry, there are times when your sombre air and your mysterious demeanour are very attractive, but there are occasions when it veers into recalcitrance and that is just tiresome." She stopped them both in their tracks, turned Henry towards her and asked, "is she dead? Can you not bring yourself to say such a thing?"

Henry was aware that what she had said and the loud pitch of her voice had attracted stares and glances from several fellow walkers. Evangeline, on the other hand, was completely

focussed on her continuing interrogation and her eyes remained fixed to his face, impatiently waiting for an answer. He seemed to be struggling, so she softened.

“Did she die, Henry? Do you blame yourself? You know - ”

“Stop!” Henry grabbed Evangeline’s arm, placed it through his own and tipped his hat to the spectators. “Good day,” he acknowledged them with a tight smile as he began walking, replacing the hat on his head and casting a rather desperate glance towards Evangeline, who in turn was rather irritated by the sight of red constellations around Henry. After a few moments he cleared his throat and said, “nobody has died – apart from my mother, as you know, some years ago and from natural causes, and for which I assuredly do *not* blame myself. My father is elderly, frail, but lives, and my sister resides with my paternal aunt but is not in her right mind and it would therefore serve no purpose to visit her.”

The ensuing silence was broken by an approaching family. The parents were chatting and the children, a boy and a girl close in age, were playing and skipping. Evangeline suddenly felt very sorry for Henry. Had he and his sister once been as these siblings? When did she begin to go wrong in mind? But why could they at least not visit his aunt? When was the last time Henry had seen his sister? Was there a chance she would regain her faculties? Evangeline looked at Henry but he seemed so tired and distant that she decided she would not press him any further today.

Henry said nothing for a few minutes but the nasal exhalation of his breath was audible and his mouth twisted with the anticipation of an unspoken request. He stopped again and turned towards Evangeline. “It is almost...” he began, studying her face and shaking his head as if to disperse the memory. “She climbed trees, just as you did. She rode horses, just as you still do.” He took in his hand a section of Evangeline’s hair which wasn’t covered by her hat. He stroked it for a few moments with a look which she imagined was one he most usually adopted in the laboratory. He studied her face again, with a hungry intensity, which dimmed to almost nothing before he finally said, “I do not wish to talk of her any longer.”

They began their walk home, each alone with their respective thoughts.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The question of Lydia temporarily solved itself in the months preceding the wedding, for Henry had apparently been informed by his father that both aunt and sister had taken a prolonged sojourn overseas and would therefore not be available to attend the wedding. Evangeline protested that they could no doubt be contacted, and would surely cut short their stay in order to attend the marriage of Lydia's brother. Henry brushed off the protests with the pragmatic reasoning that, firstly, Mr. Jekyll senior had lost the details of the hotels in which the two ladies would be staying and, secondly, Lydia's state of mind was such that huge efforts on everybody's part to afford the opportunity of her attendance would be entirely wasted. Finally, Evangeline admitted defeat; after all, if her own brother had accepted *a priori* Lydia's absence, then surely someone hitherto a stranger would be advised to do the same.

As the wedding drew nearer, thoughts of Lydia were squeezed from Evangeline's mind and replaced with plans and shopping trips. A new home for the couple had been found, one with several attributes which appealed separately to both the doctor and his future wife: a room to the rear of the house which was the perfect size and aspect for studies and experiments; a hall with a splendid fireplace; a garden large enough for plenty of flowers, and a room in which one could read by the window and admire the darling garden. Admittedly, it had been neglected by its previous owner, but he had spent much of his time immersed in matters of a medical nature and had had no wife to insist that she had no arbour on which to sit and no blooms on which to gaze. Being a tree climber and a horse rider, Evangeline naturally adored the countryside. But her new home in Berkeley Square was perfectly placed for its proximity to her parents in Connaught Square, to Hyde Park, and to Liberty's. Oh how thrilling it all was, and how desperately she fought not to feel rather smug. But, really, a young lady must allow herself to feel a degree of delight at such prospects: an elegant wedding, a honeymoon to a surprise location, a beautiful home, a life with a handsome, charming, accomplished man. Her soul soared whenever she contemplated her future. As if the universe entirely endorsed Evangeline's good fortune, the weather on the morning of the 15th June 1880 was nothing short of glorious. Perhaps in

contrast to many brides, Evangeline had awoken at a later hour than usual. Her father had become quite nervous and had come close on several occasions to entering her bedroom on the grounds that some mischief must have occurred during the night; what bride was not awake before even the birds on the morning of her wedding? Mrs. Gunn, however, had insisted that their daughter be left to sleep. Any number of reasons could account for the fact that Evangeline had not yet stirred. It was possible that, with excitement and apprehension, she had retired to bed but not to sleep until a very late hour. On the other hand, she could indeed have been awake before the birds, unable to sleep, but fallen asleep again after a few hours. Another possibility was that she had roused but wished to be on her own with her thoughts until such time as she had to begin the preparations for her wedding.

“She is about to become Mrs. Jekyll, Fergus. Now is the ideal time for you to accept that she has grown into a woman.”

Mr. Gunn looked aghast at his wife. “How can you say that? I accepted her womanhood some years ago now.”

Sofia Gunn gave a knowing smile. “Because you knew she was always coming back.”

Fergus blustered and murmured about wanting the best for his daughter and finally protested that he had simply wanted to be assured that all was well with Evangeline.

“Eso son tonterias! (that’s nonsense!)” Mrs. Gunn clapped her hands and laughed. “I know what you are doing, Fergus Gunn,” she wagged a finger at him, “you are hoping she has changed her mind.”

Fergus opened his mouth to speak, but changed his mind. A few moments later he sighed and said, “I want her to be happy, of course I do. I’m just not convinced that Jekyll is the right man.”

Mrs. Gunn lowered her eyes. She knew she had been unfair to her husband, but she had known for a while that something had been troubling him and straightforward questioning had elicited no answers. It was fortunate that she was a good woman, for cunning was one of her strengths. When she raised her eyes to face her husband, she saw that he was more troubled than he cared to show.

“Darling, you speak as her father always. As long as he is a decent husband, she will be happy. She will make *herself* happy. Evangeline and Henry, they will make each other happy. Do not worry yourself imagining her as some helpless maiden, you know better than that. He is a good prospect.” She went to her husband and embraced him.

Mr. Gunn reciprocated with a half-hearted smile. “I feel there’s just something...” his voice trailed off as his mind failed to locate the precise phrase.

“A father’s natural fear,” Sofia Gunn assured her husband. “Come, our helpless maiden stirs,” she smiled.

At breakfast, Evangeline told her parents that she had awoken when it was still dark and decided that, rather than allow her thoughts to keep her awake until it was time to rise, and thereby potentially allow her wedding day to pass in a haze of drowsiness, she would read the final chapters of her book. Of course, she awoke hours later with the book on the floor and the chapters unread.

Mrs. Gunn glanced at her husband with a smile so small that only he detected the satisfaction behind it. He raised his eyebrows slightly but addressed Evangeline: “what was troubling you at such an hour, child?”

Evangeline placed her cup on its saucer and raised imploring eyes to her father. “Oh, papa, I think I have made a terrible mistake. Of course, I must see it through, I realise you have gone to considerable expense and, after all, Henry is a very suitable match for any lady.”

“Now listen here, Evangeline,” Mr. Gunn pushed his plate away in preparation for a speech to the effect that no child of his would enter into reluctant wedlock.

“Oh papa, I cannot do it to you.” Evangeline’s sadness dissolved into laughter. “I wish I could have prolonged the pretence in order that I should hear your fine oratorical skills in what promised to be a magnificent sermon. However, you shall save those for the wedding.”

Mr. Gunn was relieved that his daughter was not in emotional turmoil, but also annoyed that both his wife and daughter seemed to delight this day in goading him. To his shame, he felt a slight disappointment that the wedding was indeed to take place. Perhaps Sofia was

right; not entirely so, but to an extent. After so many years, their house on Connaught Square would feel as if there was something missing. He could understand less wealthy fathers who seemed eager to marry off their daughters and wave them away to life of god knows what. Yet from the day Evangeline was born he had delighted in her every breath. How could he truly be happy in the knowledge that she would pass into the care of another man?

Mr. Gunn looked so forlorn that Evangeline felt guilty at the trick she had played on him. She placed her napkin on the table and went to him, wrapping her arms around his neck and kissing his cheek. Her mother stroked her husband's arm but laughed gently.

"Fie on ye both," he sighed, "what an accursed man I am to have such a pair of conniving vixens."

"A vixen can take care of herself, papa," Evangeline assured him with a kind smile.

"Indeed," her mother nodded, "look at your wife."

Mr. Gunn could not provide a worthy retort, yet something in him would not yield a victory so easily.

"Now that you have some amusement at your father's expense, you imp, perhaps you can tell your mother and I what was troubling you?"

Evangeline sat back in her chair and frowned, "troubling me?"

"You said you awoke when it was dark, or was that part of your elaborate ruse to have some sport with your poor father?"

"It was not," Evangeline smiled, "but I was not troubled, Papa, I merely woke with my head full of thoughts. Which reminds me, mother, I had the most delicious cup of tea with Henry last week, you must join us next time."

Mrs. Gunn laughed and looked at her husband with an expression of triumph. But Mr. Gunn had not built up a good reputation and wealth by being easily diverted from his aim.

"Eva, dear, you cannot expect us to believe that you were woken by thoughts of tea. Come now, what troubled you?"

“Papa, your smiles will not conceal from a child who knows you so well your wily techniques. I can tell you are determined to hold on to the role of protector of the realm, but, really, I am not troubled. I am marrying Henry wholeheartedly, papa, and I want you to be happy with me and I do not want you to worry. It is a joyous occasion!”

Mr. Gunn felt it would be churlish to continue in this vein so he smiled and said “of course it is.”

Evangeline’s high spirits could not be dampened so she felt charitable enough to placate her father’s misgivings. “Papa, if you truly wish to know the reason for waking at such an hour, I will tell you. I wondered if I had made a mistake with my dress.” She raised her hands in a gesture of admission. “Dreadfully shallow, I know. But true. I feared there was not enough lace, you see.”

Her father was not placated by this revelation; rather, it added fuel to the fire of doubt rising in him. The only comfort he took from her confession was that she was marrying Henry with possibly a harder heart than her father realised. But he knew Evangeline; her heart had never been, and would never be, hard. Why, then, was her wedding dress a matter of such inordinate importance? Of course, he knew matters of dress were important to ladies, but was it a matter of such import, to the exclusion of all other matters to do with one’s wedding? There must be more to it, naturally. Her mind had not allowed the anxiety to be related to her suitor and therefore had permitted her only a safe doubt. There, he had solved it. But was it not now his responsibility to help his daughter realise that she did indeed have serious doubts? He could not put the idea into her head, that would only cloud the horizon more profusely. No, indeed. But...

“Tell me, Eva, which colours did you see when you first met Henry?”

Evangeline did not notice the dark expression in her mother’s eyes. Mr. Gunn made a conscious decision not to turn his head in the direction of his wife, but maintained an innocent façade.

“Papa, I am certain that I have told you about the occasion of our first meeting. You know very well I did not like Henry on sight.” Evangeline’s face broke into a smile as she continued, “I saw many different colours. With hindsight, my emotions were already

conflicted. So you see, apparently my dislike of him was not complete. And now..." she placed a kiss on her father's cheek, "I must attend to wedding preparations."

She left, and the dining room was briefly filled with the sound of only the ticking clock. Mrs. Gunn sat, silent and staring at her husband, who quietly drank his tea. Finally she got up to leave the room. As she placed her hand on the door knob, she hesitated then turned to look at her husband, who was already watching her.

He spoke first. "I will apologise. It was unfair of me."

Mrs. Gunn blinked several times, as if she had seen a version of her husband she did not care to see again. She looked at the floor, then up at the ceiling and finally at her husband. "I have never told you, but my mother could not abide you." She ignored the shock on her husband's face and continued, "I had the good sense to ignore her and judge for myself. Are you not glad I did so?" She did not wait for Fergus' reply, but left the room and closed the door.

In another part of London, Henry was feeling somewhat frustrated, his apprehension detracting from the excitement he felt at the thought of Evangeline being his wife. For months his focus had been on marrying her and on their life together. But now the day of the wedding had arrived, his thoughts had turned to other, less appealing, matters: an entire day of a multitude of eyes cast in his direction, hours of banal chatter and superficial smiles, every one of his facial expressions and physical gestures examined for signs of the absence or presence of sufficient marital affection. Of course, it was futile now to wonder at the possibility of their having married abroad, or at least having a wedding on a smaller scale. Nevertheless, he chided himself for not at least *suggesting* such an arrangement.

"Come along, Jekyll," he said to himself, straightening up and brushing invisible hairs from his suit. A day of polite endurance was as a moment in time compared to the years he would have with Evangeline.

Henry was in fact to be pleasantly surprised by how slight a sense of the arduous he felt. So glad was he that the day had finally arrived when they could get on with the business of being man and wife that he rather drifted through the entire day in a haze of laughter and pleasantries, even when a distant relative took exception to Arturo simply because he had in

his buttonhole a green carnation. Henry's response was a mere shrug and a conciliatory hand on the offended shoulder.

In the presence of such a relaxed demeanour, Mr. Gunn was forced to concede that his judgment of his new son-in-law had been harsh. He deduced that Jekyll had been overly concerned with creating an impression of the respectable gentleman. Late in the afternoon, at a point when one's alcohol consumption allows time to slow, noise to abate, and one's thoughts to crystallise to a rare pinpoint accuracy, he felt a certainty wash over him. All around him was a hum of voices, tinkling cutlery and laughter against a backdrop of music. For a few minutes he watched his lovely daughter. She was engaged in conversation with one of Henry's younger cousins and his friend, completely unaware of the latter's enraptured gaze. She seemed to be doing a lot of talking, although the cousin was doing his best to keep apace. They were laughing a lot but whenever they did so the friend's doe-eyed expression became even more adoring and his smile even more like that of an imbecile. Mr. Gunn knew in that lucid, limbic moment that his daughter was quite capable of being anything she wanted to be and overcoming any trials cast her way. He did not, however, allow himself the delusion that his parenting should be allotted a large share of the credit for producing this charming and competent woman. He was not what you may call a modest man but neither was he unduly pompous or vain. In fact, he did himself a disservice in dismissing so lightly his role in the raising of his children, but nothing would persuade him against his view that the example of their mother and their own innate attributes had produced two remarkable human beings. This thought amused Mr. Gunn for a moment; how parents strived and fretted to ensure that their offspring would not bring shame and dishonour to their family, only to eventually be forced to acknowledge that one could no more control a person than one could wrestle with a bear and hope to emerge victorious.

Evangeline caught her father's eye and knew from his expression that his mind was on a philosophical plane concerning her place in the world. She took her wine glass and raised it to him, bowing her head and smiling with love and gratitude. Her father responded in kind and tears sprang to his eyes, at which point Mrs. Gunn laid a gentle hand on his arm. He placed his glass on the table and cleared his throat.

Henry had observed the exchange between his wife and father-in-law and found the scene disconcerting. He had felt an inexplicable rage as he saw the affection between them, so much so that he was obliged to pass the rest of the time assuring Evangeline that his rather sullen mood was a result of an excess of food, wine and conversation.

By the time they came to retire, Henry had quite forgotten his childish jealousy and a mildly euphoric tide was washing over him. They bade their farewells to their guests, some of whom were too drunk to remember the social niceties for which the occasion called, and Henry tenderly kissed his wife's hand.

"I would like to kiss your wife too," Arturo laid a staying hand on Henry's shoulder.

"Darling Art," Evangeline smiled at her brother. They embraced and she felt tears spring. "Do come and visit me *all* the time."

Arturo held her at arm's length. "You can't seriously imagine I would see you less often just because you are married. What a wound you have made, Jelly!"

"Jelly?" Henry wondered if he would ever cease to be perplexed by the nature of this sibling relationship.

"A childhood nickname, darling."

Arturo embraced his sister once more then took her hands in his. "If I marry anyone, I hope they are just like you."

Evangeline laughed. "Not *just* like me, Art, that would be strange. I rather think if they were too much like me I would dislike them."

"You're right, of course, I would like someone a lot less contrary. Off you go and I will turn up at your doorstep until I make a perfect nuisance of myself."

As they left, Evangeline noticed that Henry appeared puzzled. "You are not wearing the expression I had hoped for at this juncture."

Henry smiled. "You need not worry, I was just lost in thoughts of Arturo. I do find him a puzzle." He took her hand and kissed it again.

Evangeline's laugh was soft. "Arturo is the least puzzling person I have ever known."

"I don't wish to appear indelicate, I very much enjoy your brother's company. It's just that when he talks of women...I imagined...well..." he tilted his head slightly.

"Am I to imagine I must pick up your thread with such a gesture?" Evangeline appeared amused.

"I am quite sure you know what I mean."

Evangeline laughed. "I do, of course. Why we must talk in these hushed tones as if such proclivities are not natural!"

"Then you understand my confusion?"

Evangeline regarded Henry for a few moments. "Arturo is, shall we say, less constricted than most with regards to the sexes."

Henry laughed. "Evangeline, I have proven myself to be a man of a certain intellectual prowess and yet you consistently undermine the evidence."

She linked her arm through his and rested her head on his shoulder as they walked. "Dear Henry," she rubbed his arm, "there are yet vestiges of innocence about you." She looked up into his eyes. "Arturo *adores* women. Arturo loves men. Arturo loves *people*, Henry. Is there anything on earth less puzzling?"

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Their lovemaking that night would be remembered by Evangeline, in the future, as the night that she was first introduced to a hitherto unknown aspect of Henry's character. There remained the charming, considerate, urbane doctor she had fallen in love with. She discovered, with a relish that surprised her and delighted Henry, that her husband was a skilled and attentive lover. His appreciation of her body's contours and sensitivities was boundless and manifested itself in awe and urgent passion. But there were moments when Henry seemed to be a stranger; that was the only way she could describe it to herself at the time. She saw and sensed flashes of an alien nature, when his face and gestures would take on a guise of something bordering on cruelty or malevolence. He would grip her wrists as if

she were his captor. As he entered her, with a thrust that felt more like punishment than lust, she saw in his eyes a look of contempt or fear (she was not sure which), and his mouth twitched as he seemed to feast on her confusion and discomfort. He breathed her name into her neck as if it were a mystical incantation and in an instant he was once again loving and tender, kissing her mouth and her eyes softly, stroking her face and whispering "I love you, Mrs. Jekyll," as he drank in the sight of a woman with whom he could not quite believe he had the good fortune to be making love.

As Henry drifted off to sleep, Evangeline inspected his handsome face and wondered if all new brides felt a little unnerved by their wedding night nuptials. She was not uninitiated, in the strictest sense, in lovemaking, however intact her virginity had hitherto been. But her shock at the experience in its fullness forbade a tiredness to which she would otherwise have succumbed. After she had washed away the blood, she opened the curtains to allow the brightness of the moon to reassure her that more serious ambiguities existed.

CHAPTER NINE

The next morning Evangeline woke to a vague sense of an extra weight on the bed. She roused more fully when she heard laughter and realised she had sounded a protest. Henry sat, smiling and fully dressed, with an eager expression.

“Is it very late?” Evangeline asked.

Henry gave a non-committal smile, so she asked “what time *is* it?”

He seemed to consider the question. “There is time enough to do what we wish, but past the time when decent people have breakfasted.”

Evangeline laughed, “thank goodness we are enlightened enough not to worry whether or not we are decent people.” She studied him for a moment. “Marriage seems to have made you more playful, Henry.”

He stroked her face, suddenly serious. “Having you as my wife has contented me, and contented people are naturally more playful.”

She laid her hand over his. “You flatter me, Henry. I don’t have the power to make someone content in so short a time.”

“Not so,” he objected, with an intense look in his eyes, “you are unaware of the extent of your power.”

With her senses more alert, Evangeline became excited at thoughts of her new home and her new life. She sprang quickly from the bed and opened the curtain, exclaiming with enthusiasm at the garden.

Henry remained on the bed, too happy for the moment to move, and charmed by his young wife who pulsed with vigour and joy in so many situations. “It looks a perfect mess, I really cannot understand what you see in that garden.”

Evangeline did not turn to Henry, she was immersed in thoughts of the veritable Eden into which she would transform this garden. Every woman, no matter how comfortable her life

and how idle a life she led, must have a project of her own, lest her mind become useless and her soul rot to dust, or she become bitter and spiteful towards others. The wisdom of the age seemed to dictate that women must be preserved by means of inactivity and shelter, as if they were indoor plants or ornaments. But the evidence she herself had seen suggested entirely the opposite; in comparison to her mother, who was as active as any man, the ladies who had not exerted themselves beyond house calls, an occasional stroll or game of croquet, were often frail beyond their years and possessed a shrivelled generosity of spirit.

Finally she turned to her husband. "We will be very happy here, Henry, I can sense it. There are many colours and the house has warmth."

"Is it not your mood, rather than the house, which dictates what you see? Such a prescient attitude and talk of a house as if it has a personality is the surely the stuff of gypsies and fortune tellers."

"I rather think it is a mysterious alchemy of many things. What a shame you are of such a chemical nature and not some type of metaphysician, who could get to the root of the matter."

Something seemed to suddenly kidnap his thoughts as Evangeline moved towards him Henry became aware of his wife's body beneath the undulating barrier of her nightdress. He took her and pulled her onto his lap.

Evangeline wondered if a carnal nature was summoned at such short notice by *all* men, but such thoughts were cut short by the sensations coursing through her blood, thanks to the strokes and caresses of Henry's touch. Was the experience novel once more due to the daylight lending a different atmosphere to the room, or did her body feel different after the loss of her maidenhood? Would each occasion of lovemaking with Henry feel different, or would the time come when she would anticipate with accuracy each move, each kiss, each pattern of his breathing? Her heart raced with lust at the way he seemed to be discovering the feel of her body and its response to his touch. Doubt had been a rare visitor to Evangeline's interior life, but amidst the extreme pleasure she was feeling she wondered how many women of her ilk permitted their own enjoyment of the sensations of

lovemaking. Nobody spoke of such things but she was sure that people were meant to enjoy such feelings, otherwise Providence and Nature were indeed a cruel master and mistress. Her breathing was slow and heavy and as Henry's hand held her breast and caressed it through her nightgown, breathing whispers against her neck, she understood some of the extent of her power. As if witnessed by another self, she marvelled at her brazenness, and at the sheer pleasure that her body was capable of giving and receiving. She unbuttoned her nightgown and shifted position so that she was facing away from him, arching her back and rubbing her breasts against his hands. She raised one hand to stroke his hair, bowing her head to one side to offer to his lips more of her neck. He pulled her hips closer against him and she shivered at his hardness. As if given a signal, he lifted the skirt of her nightgown and inserted a finger inside her. She gasped loudly and Henry resisted the urgency mounting inside him. Of course, he loved her dearly, but he was grateful that the woman he loved was also a woman of passion and one who was receptive to his advances. He had no need for women who satisfied his base cravings but left him cold afterwards. Finally, he could restrain himself no longer; he lifted Evangeline from his lap and onto the bed, his eyes focused on her face. Her eyes were full of hunger and her lips were parted and swollen with passion. This time was different for Evangeline; she felt wave upon wave of longing and pleasure, with none of the reticence or unsettling emotions of the night before.

Henry was thrilled with the way Evangeline responded to every kiss, every caress, every thrust. Only when their breathing had slowed, their limbs were aching and the world seemed to briefly concentrate itself within their physical experience, did those insidious doubts come knocking gently on the doors of his mind. Like an efficient bailiff, they did their job in a quiet and cold fashion, posing the question of whether or not such heights of passion should be scaled by a lady. Had he not preferred the imbalance of the previous night? Would she not consider the possibility, now that the dam had burst – maybe not now or even soon, but some time – that a younger man would have the virility and bloom of youth that he was soon to lose? Evangeline smiled with such an expression of love and contentment that the doubts were extinguished as far as Henry knew, although in fact some wisps remained, like candle smoke in his subconscious.

“You did not undress,” she laughed.

"You did not give me the opportunity," he replied, kissing her.

Evangeline had been expecting to set off for a fortnight in Dorset, a loose-tongued wedding guest having given away the surprise, but there was a different surprise awaiting her discovery. Henry had decided to risk the assumption that their mutual love of Percy Shelley would equate to their mutual love of Italy and so had made arrangements to honeymoon there. Fortunately, the new Mrs. Jekyll was delighted but, of course, eager to ensure that her best dresses would be packed. Henry assured her that the servants would take care of everything, at which point Evangeline announced that she must get to know her servants properly on their return from Italy. She proceeded to enquire about the servants in a way that Henry thought was rather like being led down several avenues for the purposes of examining the trees.

"You really do have the most inquisitive mind, Mrs. Jekyll," he smiled, "you would have made a most excellent scientist."

Evangeline chuckled. "I do not think I am yet of an age where the phrase 'would have' may be applied." She tilted her head to one side and Henry thought she had spied something in the wallpaper. She faced him with a coquettish smile, expecting her husband to return her smile, even if it was a thin disguise for indignation. Instead, she was faced with the most enigmatic expression she had yet been faced with. "Is something wrong, darling?"

Henry blinked several times, as one sometimes does when waking. He cleared his throat and declared: "we really must do something about this wallpaper. If one looks at it for too long, there appear to be harpies lurking in the background."

"Well then, I have a project in which to throw myself wholeheartedly on our return," Evangeline declared in response.

"Are you not bored by such matters?" Henry frowned.

"Bored?" Evangeline looked incredulous. "Henry, how can one be bored by the matter of adjusting one's home to one's tastes?"

“I wasn’t thinking of ‘one,’ darling, I was thinking of *you*. I meant no insult, I assure you, I merely thought you might prefer such things to be taken care of while you attended to...to other matters.”

“Well how peculiar,” she said in a way that, had it been uttered by any other person, would have annoyed Henry. But Evangeline had a tendency to express herself with curiosity rather than judgment, and with a smile so dazzling that one was quite disarmed. “If I am too much the woman for science, and too much the society lady for domestic matters – well! I must find some pursuit which matches my station in life before you find one for me.”

Henry recoiled and began to protest, but Evangeline reminded him that time was short but she could at least make a start on acquainting herself with her new home and therefore, at her leisure in Italy, think about what exactly needed to be done to the house. She felt that she could be at home here, but Dr. Denman had been quite aged when he died and the house was in need of a more modern look to reflect its new, younger mistress. The only parts she had not yet seen, at least not properly, were those which would be used by Henry for the purpose of his work. But she had no interest in the décor of these rooms and was of the opinion that many a marriage was long and happy due to such factors as husband and wife each having a domain of their own. It was also the case that, despite being a woman neither given to fainting, nor of a fragile disposition, she nevertheless had not the slightest inclination to see the old dissecting room. Some things may be adequately imagined without having to be seen. Henry had expressed his intentions to put this room to use as a storage room, but Evangeline fancied that it would make a splendid hothouse, being in such close proximity to the garden. She could raise all manner of exotic flora and, in summers, would have the most spectacular outdoor display. She would grow the most wonderful gardenias and sit with Henry in the garden, drinking wine and enjoying their heady aroma.

Evangeline was introduced properly to the butler, the housekeeper, the maid and the footman, albeit far too briefly to build the rapport which she felt necessary for the smooth and convivial running of a household. She recognised Hope, the maid, from her meetings at the Westminster Women’s Guild, and was about to acknowledge their acquaintance when Hope’s wide eyes and sudden downcast expression told her that the maid did not wish the

rest of the household to know that she had been recognised. She resolved to reassure Hope, when she returned from her honeymoon, that there was no cause for concern.

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During the honeymoon, Evangeline was pleased to discover that, despite his rather formal manner towards the household staff (to which Evangeline was somewhat unaccustomed), there existed an implicit warmth between Henry and his butler, Poole. While any degree of similar emotion did not seem to extend towards the other servants, Evangeline was heartened to know that at least one person beside herself, Gabriel Utterson and Hastie Lanyon had managed to attain a level of intimacy with the private doctor. On a boat trip across Lake Como, Henry brought the hitherto blurred impressions of both Poole and Bradshaw, the footman, into sharp relief. Bradshaw, it transpired, had the blood of revolution in his veins. His grandfather, William, from Lily Hill, had been among the casualties of the bloody episode in 1819 at St. Peter's Field, Manchester. He had been shot by a musket, which consequently lent to the name of Bradshaw a martyred air of local heroism. The unfortunate William had left behind a young wife and a three-year-old son, the future father of Henry's footman. Yet for Evangeline, avid reader of thrilling and haunted tales as she was, Poole's ancestry had about it an exquisite aura of intrigue. Of course, only his most trusted acquaintances were privy to the details, and Henry elicited from his wife a solemn oath that on no account would she betray his confidence, as Henry himself had only learned his butler's history after several years of employment. His aunt, one Grace Poole, had been Antoinette Mason's gin-drinking, ale-swilling keeper who had rather under-estimated the capabilities of her charge. You, reader, must be familiar with the account, but as no more than a story which included the minor character based on Poole's relative. Her family, however, had been tainted by the scandal and by the connection to the unfortunate and first Mrs. Rochester, and consequently Poole's loyalty and discretion were the envy of many a society gentleman.

CHAPTER TEN

On their return from Italy, Henry sat her down in the drawing room and made Evangeline cover her eyes with her hands and promise not to peep. She sat quite still, enjoying the anticipation, yet feeling a childlike impatience that her husband's surprise was taking longer than expected. She had to press her fingers more firmly against her eyelids to ensure that she did not yield to a premature thrill.

As it was, the thrill was served prematurely from an unexpected source. Even Evangeline's quick brain was fooled into thinking that the yapping and general commotion was unrelated to Henry's staged surprise. But at the sound of his voice, which alternated between frustrated disappointment and amusement, Evangeline dispensed with the tradition of waiting for the command, and was greeted by a sight that made her squeal in a manner not dissimilar to that of the creature currently moving like a whirlwind around the furniture and through its master's feet. At the sight of his wife's delighted face and staccato clapping (rather like a child's clockwork toy, Henry thought), his heart was full. How strange at times was the human creature, so inherently selfish yet clearly in possession of a quality of the soul which rejoices in the happiness of others. He speculated that Evangeline could not have been happier had he bestowed upon her the entire wealth of the capital. For her part, notwithstanding being the cause of auditory mayhem, all this small, furry creature had to do was to be itself. To her it did not occur that she had to acquire any special talent, or adhere to any creed, or conform to any code of conduct in order to be not just accepted, but adored. But of course, Henry reasoned, with higher capabilities came more complicated interactions. Interesting, then, to watch the current interaction between his wife and this honeymoon gift of a new puppy.

Evangeline was on the carpet amid the scurrying Dachsund, enjoying paroxysms of delight at its every movement. The puppy would scramble over her legs and lick her face in a frenzy of pleasure. This woman, whom Henry had seen become distracted with irritation at a silent fly whose only crime was to be resting on a window while she sat reading, was positively ecstatic, despite her clothes, her hair, every available inch of her, being repeatedly violated.

“Oh, Henry,” she breathed, at last acknowledging the third creature in the room, “you perfect darling, what a marvellous husband you are. Even if you are very silly, imagining that you could keep a puppy quiet.”

Henry laughed, “what I imagined, my darling, is that it would be as dumbstruck as I was the first time I saw you. My knowledge of canines is extremely lacking.”

“And I am glad of it,” she smiled. She gathered the puppy in her arms and said, amidst a frenzy of mutual kissing, “yes I am, yes I am, for it means that you are all mine. Yes it does! Yes it does!”

Henry could not help laughing at his wife’s behaviour. “I am concerned that I have made a very uncharacteristic error of judgment.”

“What do you mean?” Evangeline asked, though her giggling and squealing signified a complete lack of interest in Henry’s declaration.

“Darling, she was intended as a gift, not as something to make you forget the very existence of the gift-giver.”

Evangeline laughed, “nonsense, Henry, she makes me love you even more.” She reached out for his hand and he sat beside her, taking the puppy.

“Any more of this monopolising of my wife’s attention and it’s the Thames for you,” he spoke in a very low voice in the dog’s ear.

Evangeline plucked the dog from Henry, who received a withering stare. She held the dog to her face and kissed her, allowing the creature to nibble her face and neck. “Worry not, precious, nothing will happen. He will have me to answer to.” She shot Henry an admonishing look.

Henry responded with a mischievous smile. “I do believe, Mrs. Jekyll, that you have a fearsome side to you.”

“You would be wise to hold on to that belief.”

Henry reached out and stroked her face. “What would be wise for me to hold on to, my darling, would be you.” He went to kiss her, but the puppy, evidently having bonded already

with its mistress, climbed up from her lap to form an obstruction between husband and wife.

“What an infernal pest she is turning out to be,” Henry said, though he admired the bitch’s determination.

“The most exquisite pest,” Evangeline laughed, holding the puppy tightly and showering her with kisses.

“You are going to name the wretched interloper, I presume?”

“Yes of course, darling, I shall bestow a suitable name upon her in good time.”

Henry lay back, resting on one elbow and gazing at his wife with contentment and adoration. Yet something, some malignant seed of irritation suddenly rose in him like bile.

“You really do fall in love easily, don’t you?”

For a moment, Evangeline fancied she saw a sneer pass across Henry’s face. But no sooner had it appeared than it was gone and her attention was once again stolen from her husband.

“What do you mean?” she asked.

Evangeline’s face appeared, at this moment, so innocent, so guileless, her smile so redolent of an affectionate child, that Henry felt as if his whole being had been pushed to a place so distant that he would never again be close to his wife. He felt such profound despair that he knew he must leave the room immediately or embarrass them both with his tears.

“Is something wrong?” Evangeline said with alarm.

“No, no,” Henry replied with a conciliatory gesture, “just something I had forgotten.”

Evangeline opened her mouth to offer an acknowledgment, but Henry left the room in such haste that she re-directed her remark to the puppy. She decided that now was the opportunity to acquaint herself better with her new home, so she scooped up the dog and went to explore.

Nothing held any surprise and Evangeline spent most of her tour engaged in the mental planning of redecoration and domestic adornment. Just as she was smiling to herself about her earlier rebuke towards Henry and his rather old-fashioned views (on which she intended to continue her re-education of him), she found a rather anonymous door. She tried the handle and the door opened, its ominous creaking eliciting from Evangeline a wry smile. She put her head round the door, with the assumption that the room would be empty and would therefore hold no further interest for her. In fact the room was rather full, Henry apparently having been determined to place his paraphernalia in its new home as soon as possible. She was curious to see this evidence of his brilliant mind so she entered the room and began a perusal of the many papers, books, pens and chemical apparatus, hoping that some of it may, in time, make sense to her.

She could not guess how long she had been in the room, or how long she had been watched, but when a shadow passed across a page, she was so startled that, in her alarm, she did not recognise for a moment the figure in the doorway, his face obscured by the darkness along the passageway.

“Henry! You must not prowl so, I did not hear you.”

Henry came forward slightly, his face more visible in the light of the room. His expression was odd, his face looking strained and pensive.

“Does any of it make sense to you?”

Evangeline laughed. “I would like to tell you that I have studied your formulae and you’re your papers and I think you are a brilliant doctor, but you will just have to accept that I think you are such, even without the written proof.”

Henry seemed to hold his breath for a moment, but his face relaxed into a smile. He reached for her hand and said “come, we shall take a stroll.” As she left the room, he took a key from the desk drawer and locked it behind him.

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As the evening drew near, Evangeline chose a dress for the first of many dinners that month to be hosted in honour of Dr. Jekyll and his new wife. It would soon be their turn to play hosts, but Mr. and Mrs. Balfour had insisted that Henry and Evangeline's first dinner party following their honeymoon must be as their guests. Evangeline selected a total of six dresses, one after the other, tilting her head to each side and smoothing each dress in turn over her contours as she gauged the effect in her mirror. It wasn't like her to be either indecisive or disengaged from the task at hand, but for some reason she could not fathom, she was feeling decidedly ambivalent about the whole occasion.

"Eva, you are just tired," she said to her reflection in a kind voice. She picked up the first dress with the intention of considering all six with fresh eyes, but a sudden wave of nausea and a lightheaded feeling put all thoughts of dresses and dinners from her mind. She discarded the dress, throwing it on the top of the pile, and lay on her bed feeling as heavy as lead. She felt a heightened awareness of things: the soft coolness of the bedclothes; an unfamiliar taste in her mouth; birdsong from the trees in the square, usually more muted than the urgent communication of the morning, but now, to Evangeline's ear, carrying the day's gossip back and forth. No sooner had she seen a peach glow before her than a second wave of nausea ebbed and flowed, this time accompanied by revulsion toward the scent she had recently applied to herself. With each intake of breath, she inhaled an aroma of freesias and, although she usually found the scent pleasing, she needed to be rid of it immediately. She rose to wash it off, feeling that she was to vomit at any second.

Oh, how tiresome to feel like this on such an evening. She had felt excited at the prospect of the entire ritual of the guests admiring her honeymoon glow, she and Henry recounting the sights, sounds and smells of Italy, basking in the reflected glory of each other. How shallow she could be at times, she knew. But people are made up of all sorts of foibles and contradictions. Besides, her shallow side had its compensation in the fact that she was no simpering wife; she had her own mind with its own opinions. Hence, she allowed herself indulgences. She loved her husband and was proud of him; she saw nothing wrong with wanting everyone to know that she was the woman with whom he had chosen to spend his life.

When she had washed away the floral scent, she lay down again. When she closed her eyes she saw a patch of dark violet against the blackness, identical to one of the shades she had seen the night she met Henry. She smiled, calm and drowsy, then fell into a deep sleep.

She was awoken later by a knock at the door; the housekeeper had been sent by Henry to check on his wife. Evangeline asked for some tea to be brought – hot and sweet so that she may be revived sufficiently for an evening of social niceties. What a gracious woman the housekeeper seemed, though perhaps overly nervous. Evangeline wondered if she had a husband, maybe one who was given to punishing beatings for the slightest mistake. She reprimanded herself for reading so many dramatic tales which made one feel as if every other man must harbour thoughts of killing his wife. It was then that she remembered her dream, probably caused by a blend of those tales and her new puppy. She had been following a wolf-like creature, hiding when she had the chance and always managing to avoid being sighted. She knew not why she followed the beast, but every so often a strand of hair would escape from her hood and the creature seemed to look directly at her, as if the flaming tresses had caught his eye and given away her identity. Inspired by the memory of this dream, she went into a flight of fancy as she imagined herself an author of tales which were hybrids of ancient folklore and her own London. Another knock came from the housekeeper and Evangeline resolved to rise and prepare for the evening's socialising.

Evangeline thought Henry had never looked so handsome and never been so witty. All the guests, male and female, were perfectly charmed by him. Yet he managed to deflect the shine onto Evangeline, whether it took the form of relating some amusing comment she had made on their honeymoon, describing how radiant she had looked as they dined by a lake, or praising her ebullient spirit. Like the lunar light which merely has to keep its place in the sky while the sun faithfully projects its glory, Evangeline sat throughout most of the meal making noises of agreement and thrilling to the knowledge that she had married a wonderful man.

After some time, a comment drifted along the table until, like a stench hitting one's nostrils, the words stung several ears.

“However will you keep your husband's interest when your beauty has faded, which, at your age, is imminent?”

Evangeline had a piece of fish in her mouth so she simply stared at the speaker and continued chewing. She noticed Henry's expression and she shook her head with a subtle movement to indicate that she wished for him to let it pass. Or so it seemed. After a minute or so, she dabbed at her mouth with a napkin, her expression purposeful. She turned her head in the direction of Mrs. Hastings just as Henry was momentarily distracted from his own conversation by the way his wife's eyes sparkled in the candlelight. He adored their feline quality, particularly when, as now, she looked poised to pounce.

"Mrs. Hasty, I must ask you something." Evangeline donned her most gracious smile. There were several titters behind gloved hands.

The other lady stiffened as she turned towards Evangeline. "It's Mrs. Hastings." She told herself that Dr. Jekyll's laughter was unrelated to his wife's faux pas.

"Is it?" Evangeline adopted a puzzled expression. "I think I rather prefer 'Hasty,' it seems to suit you." Before the indignant Mrs. Hastings had time to object, Evangeline added, "why did you imagine that Henry married me for my handsome countenance? I'm sure you would know that men seek other qualities besides beauty."

There was a momentary hush in the room until old Mr. Wagstaff, evidently having ignored his wife's pleas to ingest his meal in larger proportions to his alcohol intake, said loudly, "indeed they do not, but those such as myself accept that we cannot expect such high standards of women when we ourselves do not reach them." His wife huffed and protested but they both laughed.

Mrs. Hastings prepared her most obsequious demeanour and fluttered her napkin as she cleared her throat. "I simply meant, my dear, that your husband is so thoroughly absorbed in your beauty that I fear he is, like so many men, to be disappointed when your beauty loses its bloom."

Evangeline sat back in her chair as if to consider the point made by the lady. "I follow your argument to a certain extent, Mrs. Hastings," she began, nodding slowly. She took a sip of red wine and continued, "but what you must understand is that some women *never* lose their beauty. They continue to shine, despite their age, like a diamond. In such cases, other women can only concede their eternal majesty which makes their own, rather false

attraction, fade with even more haste. These other women can only look on with scorn, worse than the big, dumb rocks which surround such a precious stone.”

Hortense Balfour guffawed, much to the consternation of Mrs. Hastings, who was now attempting to divert the guests, quickly raising the subject of a friend’s niece who had become embroiled in a shameful scandal. Evangeline felt Henry’s eyes upon her and turned towards him. She again was faced with an enigmatic expression and one which sent conflicting messages: heated, but kind; angry, but amused. He said nothing, but held up his wine glass in a salutation. He then turned to the unfortunate Mrs. Hastings and his eye alighted upon an unsightly mole on her lower chin which had sprouted a rather long hair. Several times he looked away but each time he was compelled to stare once more, until the urge to deracinate the offending article became so strong that he felt a palpably effervescent thrill in his veins each time he imagined pulling out the hair. He saw himself climbing onto the table and tugging on the hair as if it were an enormous weed. He relished the way the flesh ripped as he went deeper under the skin. His heart beat faster as he pictured the now exposed root ploughing a fresh furrow. The ferocity with which he dragged the hair out was rewarded by a purged trough on the face of Mrs. Hastings, a face now wounded, disfigured and raw but finally pure and flawless.

“Jekyll!” The voices snapped him into consciousness.

Utterson was shaking Henry’s shoulder firmly, while Lanyon’s face came into focus, the man looming over him and peering at Henry with concern. The entire room was hushed and each face looked toward Henry with shock and concern, a few dinner guests exchanging what they imagined were discreet whispers. By the time Henry was looking down at his stinging fingers and looking around for Evangeline, she had re-entered the room with a cloth and a bowl of water. The Balfours’ butler was removing the broken glass from the tablecloth and Hortense herself was doing her best to recover the previously cordial atmosphere of the evening.

“I must apologise,” Henry murmured, “a – a- temporary lapse of the brain, I fear I have been working too hard lately.” He looked at his hosts and gave a feeble smile. “I really am terribly sorry, I will of course recompense you for the glassware; I hope it is not

irreplaceable. I rather think, however, that I have irrevocably spoiled the night." He did not know what else to say.

Mr. Balfour made some agreeable noises and Mrs. Balfour came round to the table to kiss Henry and reassure him that they had plenty of such wine glasses and she simply wished him to go home and rest. With that, Mr. and Mrs. Jekyll departed for home, assuring Utterson that Henry was feeling quite well and they had no further need of assistance from either he or Lanyon.

Once home, Henry lay in bed discussing the various merits and flaws of each guest, having told Evangeline that he felt well and he wished not to discuss the episode with the wine glass. Finally, he and Evangeline fell silent, replete with gossip and rich viands. Evangeline lay quite still, savouring the soothing lamplight and the night's hush. She turned towards Henry and noticed that his body was relaxed and his breathing was steady and slow. She supposed she was not as tired as she should have been due to her earlier sleep. In fact, she felt quite invigorated; perhaps the evening's battle with Mrs. Hastings had warmed her blood and strengthened her constitution, despite the evening's worrying finale. However, she was bored of thinking about the dinner and silly ladies of no substance. She turned up the lamplight and got up in search of her book.

No sooner had she read a few sentences than Henry began to chuckle. His laughter deepened, resonating through his chest and Evangeline's arm. When she turned to see if he was fully awake, he said in a low drawl:

"Big, dumb rocks." He laughed again and put an arm around her waist to pull her towards him.

"I thought you had fallen asleep."

"Merely repose."

Evangeline shuffled further into the bed and resumed reading. She had come to the part where there seemed no possibility of the tragic heroine being rescued from her predicament and she was relishing the thrill of borrowed terror from the safe confines of her own bed chamber. Just at the point of the horrific climax, she felt Henry's hand slide

under the skirt of her nightgown. She turned to him and, despite her toes curling in arousal, she attempted to admonish him.

“I have just reached the most exciting point.”

“As indeed have I,” Henry almost growled, taking the book from her and throwing it to the floor.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Evangeline awoke one morning with a sense of both excitement and trepidation, for she had made a decision several weeks ago, and today was its fruition. By a combination of information (though scant) from Henry, and a few discreet enquiries to the servants, Evangeline had established the whereabouts of Lydia. It had been a relief to learn that Henry's sister was indeed living with an aunt; until she had confirmed this detail, she had not been able to rid herself entirely of the thought that an aunt was a euphemism for either death or the asylum.

Evangeline had written to the aunt to introduce herself and to enquire about the possibility of a visit to Kent. A perfectly lovely reply had arrived from Aunt Agnes, inviting Evangeline to her house in Walmer. Evangeline had decided that, although the whole enterprise had an air of plotting and secrecy about it, Henry would surely be less anxious if the visit was presented as a *fait accompli*. She further justified the good sense of her strategy in light of the fact that she had some news which she must tell Henry before the event, which took precedence over this visit, and it would hardly be fair to present him with two simultaneous shocks.

Mr. and Mrs. Jekyll had settled into a rather comfortable breakfast routine of newspaper reading, fussing over the puppy, now boldly bearing the name Lillith, and exchanging ideas and plans for the day's activities. Of course, Evangeline was not entirely honest about what lay ahead for her for most of the day, but Henry had a far larger secret weighing on his mind. Although he was concerned about events in Afghanistan, he was deeply preoccupied with an obstacle which was slowing his progress in the laboratory. Not until he heard the unfamiliar sound of a sigh from his wife did he realise that she had been quiet and her normally healthy appetite seemed absent. He placed the newspaper on the table, and his cup on its saucer.

"Is something troubling you?"

Evangeline was surprised by the question; until it had been asked, she would say that she was reticent, but not troubled. She gave her husband a quizzical look and, for a moment, when Henry looked into her eyes with a searching expression, she realised with sadness that

no individual could ever truly know another individual. No matter how intimate the familial or friendly connection, each person was alone in certain matters. No matter how well-intentioned, her parents had misled their children with their candid outlook and open communication. How confusing the world felt at present. She hesitated a moment, slightly distracted by thoughts that she was selfish not to care more about other events at this time.

“Henry, we are to be parents.”

This plainly stated utterance, and Evangeline’s defiant expression, as if she were girding her loins for battle, misled Henry as to the meaning behind his wife’s declaration. His laugh was one of uncertain amusement, unaccustomed as he was to women raising objections before his speech or actions had caused offence.

“What amuses you?”

“You do, darling.” He laughed again.

Some women looked quite ugly when their mood was unpleasant, but Henry found Evangeline’s expressions of displeasure quite endearing. Yet for him this was also an indication of his negative qualities; should a man not feel the pangs of his wife’s unhappiness?

Evangeline’s face softened and she sighed again. “I am very divided, Henry. Very divided.” Henry frowned as she took a sip of tea and continued. “Oh darling, I know it’s all perfectly natural, and generations before us have done it, generations after will do it. Of course, part of me admires your cavalier attitude towards the news,” she paused and looked at him carefully.

Henry wanted to protest that his attitude was rarely cavalier towards anything, but his confusion and his wife’s rather intense demeanour dictated that, for the time being, his opinion must be contained.

Evangeline took another sip of tea and, not for the first time, Henry made a mental note to study in the future the effects of this brewed concoction upon the female brain, such were its remarkable powers of regeneration upon clarity of thought.

She continued, "Contrariwise, I cannot help but feel a little affronted that you seem to be treating my announcement with a good deal of frivolity."

"Oh come now, darling, really. I merely laughed at the gravity with which you made the announcement – which, after all, is hardly a thing which needs announcing." He watched her blink strenuously several times before narrowing her eyes at him. For a few moments the room was silent except for Henry moving his teaspoon, for no particular purpose other than to stop feeling as if he stood at the foot of a rumbling volcano. He knew he had said something wrong, yet had his life depended upon it, he could not pinpoint the exact nature of his error.

Evangeline dabbed at her mouth with her napkin and placed both hands on the table.

"For the first time in our relationship, Henry, I am disappointed." She stood to leave the room.

"Evangeline, I must protest," Henry objected, quite exasperated. "I simply cannot understand why I must be expected to attach such ceremony to a matter which, frankly, will happen without the need for grave debate."

Evangeline stood stiffly, her hand on the door knob and her posture such that she appeared taller.

"I see," she said in a hard voice, her head only partially turning towards Henry. "Well, as a man you have the luxury of all kinds of presumptions. I, on the other hand, am feeling quite unwell and, I do not mind admitting, a little afraid. Therefore, while I do not expect a serious debate, I *did* expect a rather more impassioned response to the news that *we* are expecting our first child."

As she opened the door, Henry leapt from his chair and cried out to Evangeline, who turned to him with a start, "Why did you not say so?" Henry implored, leading his wife to a chair.

Evangeline allowed herself to be seated, but regarded Henry with a bemused expression.

"Ah," Henry scratched his head in embarrassment, "'we are to be parents'...yes, I see."

Evangeline laughed, realising Henry's misinterpretation. "Really, Henry, whoever announces the intention of future parenthood in such a fashion?" She considered her statement from Henry's original perspective and laughed again. In fact, her laughter became so raucous that Henry grew concerned for her health.

"Darling, please try to be calm," he admonished in a soothing voice, kneeling beside her and placing his hand on her arm. His caution had an instantly sobering effect and she gave him a steady glare.

"What mischief do you imagine I could possibly cause myself by laughing?"

"I am merely trying to advise against over-excitement."

Evangeline pulled a face. "I would estimate the number of fatalities caused by excessive excitement to be infinitesimal. And you may be wise to remember that my predicament may be said to have been caused by over-excitement on *your* part, Henry."

Henry attempted a response but Evangeline held up a silencing hand and continued:

"I cannot tolerate the thought of the months ahead becoming a litany of unfounded omens and ridiculous old wives' tales." She softened at the sight of Henry's chastened expression. "A child will bring some much-needed gaiety in your life, Dr. Jekyll. You wear the world too heavily sometimes."

Henry's smile was weak. "Sometimes I do."

The carriage ride to Walmer was a pleasant one, the time passing in anticipation of meeting Agnes and Lydia, watching the changing sky and landscape, and reading. When the carriage stopped outside the house, Evangeline felt anxious. If the visit did not go well, should she not mention the visit to Henry?

No sooner had she dismounted the carriage than Aunt Agnes was upon her in a bustle of fabric and twittering. Evangeline laughed as the older lady threw her arms around her.

"Aunt Agnes, it is lovely to meet you at last."

"Oh, my dear! My, my, my, how very beautiful you are." She held Evangeline at arm's length to admire the new Mrs. Jekyll. Her gaze was long and wistful, as though the

visitor before her had triggered a nostalgic trance. Finally, she shook her head and regained focus.

“My dear, where are my manners? You must excuse me. Come in, come in, we have luncheon waiting for you.” She linked her arms through Evangeline’s, chattering as they entered the house.

“You were probably warned about our ‘unconventional’ ways. Of course, Gwen normally greets our visitors, but I was so excited to meet you that I waved her off to attend to the food preparations.”

“I see,” Evangeline smiled in return. She hesitated before she continued, “I ought to tell you, I suppose: I have informed no one of my visit. I intend, of course, to tell Henry on my return. Which is to say that I have no preconceived idea of your ways, unconventional or otherwise. But please be assured, Aunt Agnes, that I judge no one, regardless of how they conduct their lives.”

Agnes made an odd sound, rather like a pigeon, as she motioned Evangeline to sit.

“Poor, dear Henry,” she mused, almost to herself.

Evangeline felt it impolite, at this juncture, to ask Aunt Agnes to explain this lamentation, so she simply waited for the musing to pass.

“You need not be respectful and ceremonial here with us, my dear. Please just call me Agnes – the aunt part makes me sound like a family heirloom and I wish for conversation and human company, not to be dusted down and merely displayed for the younger generation.”

“Yes, of course,” Evangeline laughed. She already liked this woman very much.

“Please do not think badly of Lydia; it is not from deliberate ill manners that she does not yet introduce herself. She...she rests a lot...no, not rests, exactly, that makes her sound too much like an invalid or a cat, does it not?” Agnes gave a small, nervous laugh.

“I understand,” Evangeline said, though she did not. How could she?

"I am quite sure you do *not* understand – how can you? But I am equally certain that you are not offended, which is as much as one can ask of you, so that will suffice." She gave another laugh and sighed immediately afterwards. "Oh dear, Evangeline, you must forgive me, we are so unaccustomed to visitors that I become quite nervous on such occasions."

"Oh please don't be nervous, I so wished to meet you both and I do not wish to make you uncomfortable." Evangeline suddenly saw a family resemblance in the way that Agnes' body relaxed, just the way Henry's had done this morning. It was quite remarkable to watch, more like a grateful collapse than a sign of ease.

"Oh child, it is not you that makes us uncomfortable." She studied Evangeline with a sad but benevolent smile. "You're a good woman, I am quite sure. Henry must be very happy."

The door opened and a shadow appeared on the wall seconds before a figure seeped into the room. She was tall, not much shorter than Henry, with a regal air. She wore a cautious expression, not exactly hostile but one which warned the visitor to tread carefully. Her dress was a very dark blue and seemed heavy for the weather. Evangeline suspected that she wore it to reflect her wintry demeanour, not necessarily because she felt the cold. The only photograph Evangeline had seen of Mrs. Jekyll senior showed nothing other than a rather ordinary, timid woman so she supposed that, in the flesh, she must have been much more handsome to produce such strikingly attractive children. There was something ethereal about Lydia, something untouchable. Yet she also had an elemental aura about her, a kind of ancient, biblical sensuality. Lydia seemed to challenge one's ideas, as if one's opinion of her would be constantly forced to change. As Agnes offered introductions and chattered about minor family details and luncheon arrangements, Evangeline studied Lydia's face. Her mouth was neither too small nor too full; her nose neither too large nor too pert; her eyes neither too close together nor set too far apart. There was something mournful about her, but perhaps Evangeline imposed upon her that quality. Had Lydia's condition been so severe that she was consigned, all those years ago, to a life of spinsterhood? She realised, to her shame, that she must have been staring at the woman with a look of pity, for she detected a defiant tilt of the chin, a jutting of the jaw and a glint in Lydia's eye and offered, by way of recompense, a blush and a downward glance.

Had Evangeline looked again at Lydia she would have seen a different expression to the one anticipated. Instead of a reprimand, there was now on Lydia's face a look of compassion, understanding and, yes, pity. So Henry still did not talk about her. When would he realise that he was more of a victim now than she was? Her first instinct at the sight of Evangeline was a mixture of emotions – partly amusement and partly bitterness. How the human nature loved to judge. True enough, Evangeline was exactly what she herself would have chosen, for Henry or any other handsome and successful gentleman. She really was the most exquisite creature Lydia had ever seen. Yet Henry, despite his façade of the archetypal male, could not possibly have chosen this female above all others, however perfect she may look upon his arm, unless there was depth beyond the flawless exterior.

“Is Henry aware of your visit?”

Evangeline was taken aback with the directness of Lydia's question. Agnes mewled and shifted in her chair.

“He will be,” Evangeline responded eventually.

Lydia gave no further retort but studied the other woman. *They are barely past the wedding and already there is deception*, she thought. *No doubt I am dismissed as a mad woman by Henry, living only in the attic room of his mind.*

The remainder of the visit was uneventful to the extent that Evangeline was quite puzzled over Henry's misgivings. Whatever Lydia's condition *had* been was now quite extinct. It just remained for Evangeline to persuade Henry that he had been estranged from his sibling long enough.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Evangeline spent the morning in her own mind. Henry was not accustomed to his wife in this mode, attempting as she usually did to reside in his. Therefore he was troubled, and when Henry was troubled he stayed in his own mind and searched for answers therein. He most certainly would have been invited inside Evangeline's mind; indeed, he would have been warmly welcomed. There he would soon have learned that she was deciding how best to broach the subject of her clandestine visit to Walmer, the remainder of that day having been uneventful to the extent that Evangeline was satisfied that, contrary to Henry's misgivings, whatever Lydia's condition *had* been, it was now quite extinct. It just remained to encourage Henry that they need no longer be estranged. But Henry was both polite and wary, even with those closest to him. Chemicals and formulae could be explored, discovered, concocted, contained and controlled, but it was not the case with people. People were to be allowed privacy and their mental battles were to be respected as their own. Henry reasoned that Evangeline's pensive mood coincided with her recent biological change and her concern with their changing roles as parents. He felt a tenderness towards this maternal side of Evangeline, of course, but also a renewed anxiety that she was concerned about Henry's capabilities as a father. The solution, therefore, was obvious: Henry must work harder to become the man he knew he could be.

He had a charitable function to attend later and for most people this would suffice for the day as proof of one's character as a decent, well-intentioned citizen. But Henry felt that such activities, although beneficial to some degree, did not reflect the true nature of an individual. Henry wished to know in his heart that he was a good man. He wished to feel, as a rock composed of tangible and visible composite layers, that his soul was imbued in its entirety with goodness and purity. He made up his mind to pay another visit to Lanyon and to put his mind to the troublesome business of the formula. He must do his best for his wife and child and he wanted to be able to tell Evangeline that he knew for certain he was to continue to be a good husband and that he was to be a competent father. With this resolution, he bade his wife farewell and set off for the Lanyon residence.

On his return that afternoon, he expected to go straight to his cabinet, but he found Evangeline at home.

“Darling, are you not feeling well?”

“Just a little indisposed,” she smiled at him.

“You should have told me this morning, had I known I would not have left you.”

“Nonsense, Henry, of course you must leave me, you have work to do.”

He held his hand to her forehead. “You feel hot.”

“I am mildly fatigued, nothing more.” She gently removed his hand from her forehead.

“But –”

“Henry, please,” she sighed, “I am not an invalid, I simply feel lethargic.”

He looked at her for a while as she studied him with a mischievous smile and kissed his mouth.

“Henry Jekyll, I will not allow us to become one of those serious couples we laugh at and despise.” She took his hand in hers. “Come now, tell me what the busy doctor has been engaged in today.”

Henry held her hand in his, encasing it as a tiny bird in a cave. “Everything will be quite well, darling.”

Evangeline smiled at him, glad of the affection but not sure of what it was that she was being reassured. They sat for a few moments, the air thick with words unsaid. Evangeline shifted her position and Henry’s hand tightened around hers. She twisted her hand free and placed it on top of his.

“I have something to tell you.”

He took a deep breath. “What is it?”

“I went to see someone yesterday.”

Henry frowned for a few moments, trying to predict where this particular path led. "Darling, if you went to consult some charlatan on some...some matter..."

Evangeline was perplexed. "Whatever are you talking about?"

He took a deep breath and told himself to be patient and understanding. "Darling, I know it must be frightening to contemplate motherhood. Of course, I do not have the physical burden you carry, but I share your mental anxieties, I truly do. But I have every faith that we can prepare ourselves for this new era of our lives and we can make sure we do our very best, and...and..." he searched for an effective ending.

"Henry, if you are going to ramble so, I must insist that you be quiet and let me tell you where I went, before I burst with the burden."

Henry looked momentarily affronted but he could not help admiring his wife's boldness. He fervently hoped their child would inherit such a trait.

"Indeed, well...my rambling was leading up to my assertion that we have no need of cards, clairvoyants, gypsies and the like, to prophecy an outcome for which only we have the entitlement and capability to control." He realised, with surprise, that his wife was not about to acquiesce, so he continued, "That is to say, I must forbid it. You understand, I merely wish to assure you that we have no use for such things."

Evangeline raised her eyebrows in such a way that Henry could not tell whether her response amounted to an agreement or a challenge. He waited for clarification and soon he knew that she had in fact intended to raise a challenge. She sat back in her chair and regarded Henry as a cat regards a mouse. There was less deadly intent, but the predator looked sure of the spoils.

"While I acknowledge your kind concern, I must object. Aspersions being cast aside as to my superstitious and rather silly nature, you object to such things as fortune-telling and clairvoyants while attempting the very same feats yourself." An unexpected smile appeared on her face. "Do you know, that's rather amusing. If you have any ambitions in that field, you must dispose of them at once, for you should become a pauper with such inaccurate predictions." She laughed again, with much volume and enthusiasm.

Henry became impatient to learn the details of this burden she had mentioned.

“Come now, Evangeline, you have made your point. Tell me where you have been. Please tell me you have not taken some concoction for sickness without consulting me first. There are some unscrupulous characters in London who –”

“Henry, please! Really, this must stop. You will send me to a doctor to cure my insanity if you continue in this vein, if you insist on treating me as if I am either hysterical or stupid, or both. I am having a child. I have not lost the use of my intellect nor have my powers of reasoning waved goodbye. I am the woman you married, and that woman did not consult mediums or scoundrels then, and she is certainly not doing so now.”

Henry had the good sense to feel suitably rebuked, so he said in a quiet voice: “Be assured, I have your best interests at heart.”

“It occurs to me that I did indeed visit ghosts, as far as you are concerned. However, darling,” she tapped his knee in a conspiratorial manner, “I did not need to consult mediums, as my hosts were in fact very much alive and a great deal more welcoming than I imagine dead people to be.”

Henry clasped his forehead. “I am beginning to get a headache.”

“Well I imagine that you of all people could lay your hands on a cure,” she smiled, but Henry did not reciprocate. “I went to Walmer.”

It took a few moments for Henry to process what she had said and what the words meant.

Evangeline had to bite her lip to stop a torrent of explanations bursting forth. She wished so much to reassure him, but she felt that he deserved at least a chance to absorb the shock of her announcement. But Henry was frowning with such intensity that she feared something of his anatomy may be injured.

“Henry,” she ventured tentatively.

The frown diffused and in its stead appeared a look of bewilderment and finally one of controlled hostility.

“You went to Walmer?” He asked the question in a measured and emphatic tone.

Evangeline could only look mildly apologetic.

Henry looked away and sighed deeply. He looked at her again but felt lost and betrayed.

“You went to visit Lydia?” His head was hung low and his tone was incredulous.

“Lydia and Aunt Agnes, yes.” Evangeline tried to sound neither too meek nor too indignant.

“For what purpose, Evangeline?”

“To meet them, Henry.” She saw a flash of anger in Henry’s eyes but she was determined not to let him make her feel like a wayward child. She held his gaze and the anger flickered and died as flame in a draught. But his jaw was still hard and his lips pursed in resentment. Of course, he was entitled to his own feelings about his family but, really, must he be so dramatic? After all, Lydia seemed neither dangerous nor insane.

“How was she?” Henry’s voice was low and his eyes were fixed on the floor.

“Aunt Agnes or Lydia?”

Henry’s head snapped up. At that moment, he felt impaled by a spear of such intense hatred that it took his breath away. He placed both hands on the arms of his chair to steady himself and quickly laughed.

“How silly of me. How are they *both*?”

Something about Henry’s laugh had unnerved Evangeline. It had sounded wild somehow. She watched him regain a composure she knew he did not feel.

“They were both in good health and of sound mind,” she replied.

Henry studied her for a few moments. “Lydia is not of sound mind,” he said, with particular emphasis on the last two words.

“She was completely sane, Henry. I do not know when you last saw her, but she is quite recovered.” Evangeline surprised herself with her own vehemence. Although she did not blame Henry for the origin of his sister’s problem, she had long been incensed by the treatment of women whose conduct did not fill the required mould.

Henry's glare was penetrating, yet still she returned his gaze. Finally he said, "I love you Evangeline, I truly do. But you had no right." He stood and left the room, leaving in his wake for Evangeline a low cloud of pale green. She sat rooted in her chair, the cold wind of disapproval blowing around her. Tears ran down her cheeks and she wondered if marriage at times was *supposed* to make one feel halved.

She dined alone, having been informed that "Dr. Jekyll is working through the evening and has asked that a meal be brought to his study." She in turn went to her Women's Guild evening meeting where she discovered that Hope had spent her day off not in gay abandon and pleasurable pursuits, but tending to the cuts and bruises borne yet again by her poor sister. Hope was uncomfortable at first with divulging the circumstances around the incident. Evangeline's question of whether there was any way the sister could leave her husband was met with a fidgeting and silence, but an interjection from a brash woman who exclaimed "husband! That's a laugh!" was countered by a stout defence from Hope that "some women have to make a living the only way they can," and eventually Evangeline was given to understand that Hope's sister was regularly given rough treatment by her 'customers.' Buoyed up by indignation at the plight suffered by some unfortunate souls at the hands of savage men, Evangeline quite forgot Henry's cold anger and promised Hope that she would make it her mission as a committee member of the Women's Guild to take up the cause of women such as Hope's sister.

On her return home, she found Henry in the drawing room with a book and a glass of Scotch. His greeting was amiable enough, yet the sobriety in his tone told Evangeline that, despite the drink, she was not quite forgiven.

"Henry, I do wish you would not continue to be so distant from me."

Henry sighed. "I am not distant, darling, I merely feel that we are at an impasse and therefore any further discussion is without benefit to either of us."

"Oh, Henry," Evangeline sat down and tossed her hat aside, suddenly weary. "I'm afraid I cannot agree. You see, I think there is enormous benefit to be gained by you if you would only listen. You can have a relationship again with Lydia. It saddens me to see that you are both as strangers to one another, yet you could be such great friends."

Henry's jaw tightened and he looked away for a few moments.

"Henry, I know it must seem -"

"Evangeline. Please," Henry held up his hand. "That is just the point. You *don't* know. You don't know Lydia, you don't know our background, you really know nothing about the situation. You must allow me to deal with matters relating to my family in a way I see fit. I dealt with the matter sufficiently a long while ago, and it suits us all perfectly well. None of us – not Lydia, not Agnes, and certainly not I – wishes the circumstances to change in the slightest." He lowered his hand and took a sip of whisky.

Evangeline frowned and sat watching him for a while.

Henry blinked slowly, feeling his patience stretch thinner for the second time that day.

"Evangeline, why on earth would you be troubled so by a matter which troubles no other soul?"

She felt irritation mounting, not so much by his refusal to negotiate but by his attitude that seemed to make of a wife nothing but a compliant dormouse.

"What troubles me at present, Henry, is that I feel you are not being entirely honest with me. What also troubles me is that I feel as if you are closing a door on me. I'm sorry Henry, but I disagree with you. Firstly, I don't feel at all that the way you have dealt with the matter suits everyone – in fact, I don't see how you can possibly say that it suits you all perfectly well when you have had nothing to do with your sister for years. You have made it quite clear that you don't wish the circumstances to change, but you cannot express the same sentiment for Lydia."

Henry at first looked taken aback. He then narrowed his eyes at his wife.

"Would you, then, like to convey her sentiments?"

"I would not, it is not my place. I merely do not see that it would be of any harm for you yourself to hear her sentiments."

"Indeed? Well, you visited her and you're quite sure that she is not happy with the situation as it is between us. So...I ask you – what are her feelings on the matter?"

“Henry, I do not know! You are interrogating me as if we are in a court of law, when all I am trying to do is establish some communication between you and your only family. Why must you insist on being so intransigent?! Lydia has not directly expressed her feelings on the matter to me, but I am quite sure that she is *not* perfectly happy with things the way they are. I *know* she is troubled by the distance between you both, I have seen her melancholy expression when she utters your name.”

“Ah!” Henry’s hand flew up in a dramatic gesture. “Well then, Evangeline, there is the evidence! A melancholy expression, by Jove!” He took another sip of Scotch, then stood to leave the room.

“Will you not even consider visiting her and your aunt?” Evangeline asked, looking down at her skirts.

“Evangeline, I am very busy with work and we have more pressing things to prepare for, don’t you agree?”

They both left the room, each lost in their own silent resentments. On the landing, Evangeline put a foot on the stairs and was surprised to see Henry head in the other direction.

“Are you not coming to bed?”

Henry did not look at his wife, but swirled the Scotch around in the glass.

“I have some work I would like to finish before the morning, Evangeline.” He looked over at her and his heart softened. “It has nothing to do with our disagreement, I assure you.” He forced a smile.

His smile was not returned and Evangeline approached Henry.

“Henry, do you remember when you found me in your study? I was reading some of your papers.”

He was wary now. “I do. I recall you said something about thinking I am a brilliant doctor, but not having the written proof. What of it?”

Evangeline straightened and looked at him with an air of defiance. "You are brilliant, Henry. But your experiments have so much more promise than your intended purpose."

Henry contained his emotion, but anger had blossomed inside him. "It seems you have rather a flair for deception."

Evangeline would not be cowed, and she held his gaze. "I did not deceive you, Henry. When you found me, I had read some of your work but I did not understand it. Over time, I was able to comprehend your theories."

"Yet you never again mentioned what you had read."

"It had not occurred to me until this evening."

"Just as it did not occur to you to inform me of your visit to sister until *after* the event."

"The two matters were quite unrelated."

"*Were?*"

"Yes, Henry. Do you not see it? If indeed your sister is unwell, you can help her. Your experiments, which you have told me yourself you have since had great success with, could help others, including your own kin."

Henry laughed without humour and was confounded for a few moments by this turn of events. He took a step down onto the staircase and Evangeline moved with him.

"Henry, do you not see it?"

"I do not. Your comprehension of my theories is superficial, to say the least. I mean no insult, Evangeline, but my experiments have been fine-tuned and...and...oh, this is nonsense!" He waved his arm crossly and continued down the stairs.

Evangeline moved in front of her husband, moving sideways down the stairs and raising her voice in frustration. "But Henry, if you believe Lydia is ill and you have the capabilities and the means to help, why will you not do so?"

"I do not have the capabilities!" his voice rose in response.

“Henry, you are being absurd! This is just obstinacy!”

“You do not understand!” he bellowed, both arms instinctively rejecting all that was in front of him. The glass flew out of his hand, the remaining whisky splashing onto the stair rail and the carpet. In an instant he stood frozen on the stair, watching his wife tumble to the floor, wordless finally, but making sounds of pain and shock.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Evangeline lay on her bed looking up at the ceiling. She had awoken some time ago, softly crying and curled into herself like an ammonite. It had taken several moments to remember that she was in her parents' house.

What should she do? Should she return to Henry? After all, some may say: for better or for worse, in sickness and in health. But surely these stipulations were not absolute? She assuredly could not be expected to remain in a marriage under *any* circumstances. Oh, how much pain she felt. Not just the physical pain, though of course that was still present. No, the worst pain was in her heart and it came in vicious bursts and flowed through her veins like poison. What should she do?

She had not heard her father's advice on the matter, for he had not spoken of it in the entire fortnight since it had happened. He had visited Henry; that much Evangeline knew. Shortly after the incident, when Fergus Gunn's grief had solidified to anger, he went to wreak vengeance on his son-in-law. Do not imagine that his wife was the voice of reason, the dove of peace, or the angel of forgiveness; when Evangeline felt well enough to eat her meals in the dining room and noted her Arturo's swollen knuckles, she knew that a fist against Henry's face or stomach would have been the only deterrent to a plunging knife held by a screaming Sofia Gunn.

Although it pained Evangeline, despite her own injured body and soul, to think of the damage caused to Henry's handsome face and masculine pride, she felt he had suffered comparatively little consequence. For she knew that Henry would not have felt the same attachment to their unborn child; it was still a nebulous, intangible thing for him and he could not have felt the bond that Evangeline had, changing from the inside as she had. There were other indignities he did not suffer: several nights after her father's encounter with Henry, Evangeline had awoken in the middle of the night and got up to fetch a drink of water. On her way she heard someone crying – not a woman's cry, for it was neither high-pitched and wailing nor soft and mournful. The sound that came from her father shocked her, for she had never before heard him crying. She imagined a wounded, angry animal, caught in a trap and howling for freedom and revenge. She wished to go to him, to comfort

him, but she was stopped by the thought that she may add fresh humiliation. She had stood still and silent, her heart pained by the words exchanged between her mother and father.

“But why, Sofia, why?” Her father’s voice was choked with frustration.

Her mother was silent but Evangeline knew she would be comforting her husband.

“I was sure he loved her. Certain!” Fergus banged his fist on a table. “If I had any suspicion he would not treat her with the utmost respect and care, I would have done everything in my power to part them. I mean it, Sofia, *everything*.” With the last sentence, his voice was a menacing growl.

“Fergus, come now,” her mother soothed, “she is a woman, not a child. You forget, no?” She gave a gentle laugh.

Fergus sighed, “I do not forget she is a woman, I am only too aware of it. But she is *our* child, Sofia, she always will be. She and Art will always be our children. I will never stand by and let them be harmed. Never!”

“I meant you forget about *us*. Do you not think my parents felt some...some...what is this word?”

“Are you saying they *both* disliked me?”

“Ha! Of course they disliked you!”

“You said your mother could not abide me. I assumed you meant that your father didn’t share that sentiment.”

“A foreigner came and snatched away their daughter. They are human!”

“They knew I loved you, Sofia.” His voice was solemn again.

“They did, it’s true. But we ran away. They forgave me, they never forgave you. They gave you the blame for us both, but I made the decision as a woman. That is the point I make to you.”

“You’re saying we leave the matter with Evangeline?”

"What I am saying is that she would have married him no matter what you did. Perhaps the more you tried to part them, the faster she would have run to him. She will also do now what she feels best. Of course, we will always be here, we will not let harm come to her. But do not let your protectiveness cause you to underestimate her. After all, she is adamant that what happened was an accident."

"If she returns to him, we may not prevent further harm. Your parents may not have approved of me, Sofia, but I have never harmed you. I *could* never harm you. I would harm *myself* before I harmed you."

"I know that. A true man does not have the soul to harm a woman. But...if it was an accident."

"Aye, *if*. How hard must he have pushed her? An accident it may have been, but I know I could never have caused such an accident." He sighed deeply. "If you had sliced him with that knife of yours, perhaps whatever demon there is inside him would have been killed too. For only a demon could cause a man to behave so."

"Fergus, do not mock," Sofia Gunn said in a quiet voice, "for if you had not stopped me, I give you my oath that I would certainly be in gaol now, with a doctor's blood on my hands."

Evangeline felt a cold dread, a distant feeling that tragedy was inevitable.

Her father sighed once more. It was a heavy sound, one she had heard infrequently. Seldom had anything managed to dampen Evangeline's spirits as much as the sound of despondency. The last words her father spoke on the subject were these:

"I don't know what I am saying, Sofia, I just know that I cannot allow this to happen again."

Evangeline returned to her bed, drawing the sheets to herself in a way that unconsciously bandaged the area which had until recently cocooned her unfortunate infant. Yet, despite her mourning, despite her outrage, she felt she must talk to Henry. She needed to know why he had done this to her, why he had done this to *them*, what had caused such blind rage. She had not expected her marriage to be entirely free of disagreement, even an

occasional crisis, but she never imagined that her fate would be to endure such a thing. She would not allow this, or anything like it, to happen again, yet she felt a need to face Henry in order for her questions to be answered. Her mind was not on apologies, or regrets, she merely wanted an explanation. She understood, to a certain extent, his irritation at a perceived interference on her part. Yet, on that night, when she had gone to find him to explain herself and to ask why he could not see his way to at least visiting Lydia, to see for himself how much improved she clearly was, his temper had grown out of all proportion to the offence. He became impatient at first, trying to bring Evangeline's attention away from Lydia and onto the implications of his latest experiment (apparently his most exciting yet), from which many might benefit. When Evangeline asked, in that case, if his work might benefit his own sibling, his wrath grew deeper and eventually became uncontrollable. Instead of seeing the logic of her reasoning, each sentence she uttered was as if she was stoking the fires of his rage, until finally he pushed her. Only her cries of pain and shock, as she tumbled helplessly down each stair, were enough to stun Henry into the realisation that he had gone too far.

She was warm and safe now but still she had trouble sleeping. She opened a book, hoping that the fictional horrors within would divert her attention from her own tragic reality. Why had Henry ruined everything? Their lives had been so full of promise; together they could have achieved so much. He was such a brilliant man, capable of great accomplishments. But something was poisoning him, consuming him. She had suffered, to be sure, but Henry was insisting on his own torture.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Henry mounted each stair as lightly as he could, the small package held tightly against his chest. He was accommodating Evangeline's need for rest but he was eager to make amends in any way he could think of, whether in the form of grand public gestures, small tokens or private acts of penance. Henry had decided that a grand gesture was called for, sensing as he had that the other options were having a negligible effect on the sensibilities of his wife. Time, of course, was the great healer but patience was not one of Henry's strengths. Also, he reasoned, it could not hurt to apply a little salve to the multiplicity of injuries he had inflicted upon his wife, whilst waiting for time to do its most productive work.

Henry opened the bedroom door slowly, peeking into the room to see if Evangeline had awoken. Her eyes were closed and her nightgown was rising and falling in a steady rhythm. He went to the bed, knelt on the floor and held his offering close to Evangeline's face. She remained in her deep slumber for only a few seconds, after which her nose and mouth began to twitch. She stirred, only to flick a hand at an unseen irritant. The briefest of interludes passed before Evangeline was almost fully awake and spluttering, laughing and gasping at an unfamiliar ball of black fur. The cacophony of human and canine squeals gave Henry cautious hope that the chasm in his marriage could be bridged, a hope which hitherto he had not dared to wish for. Though Henry appreciated his wife's indisputable refinement, he was glad, as he watched her unflinching delight at her face being licked, that this wild, elemental streak had not been bred out of her.

And so, with the gift of a Clumber spaniel (promptly named Smout), which spawned the first glimpse of happiness between the couple since Evangeline's return, began the ascent to accord and harmony. The climate of *entente cordiale* existed around and inside Berkeley Square for several years, Henry at peace and Evangeline circling towards the same place like a mother bird searching for the perfect nesting place. If one imagines a typical, perhaps even ideal, marital life, Mr and Mrs Jekyll were exemplary models. They hosted and attended parties; they petted and fussed the animals and each other; they kept up with the fashion in art and theatre; one frequented Liberty's while the other perfected experiments; a dinner was enjoyed in honour of the good doctor's most recent charitable contribution. In

short, the marriage was performed as successfully as possible. After all that time the blot on an otherwise unblemished copy of marriage had become a rinsed stain: few knew of its existence and most were unaware of the original event. As for Henry and Evangeline, only seldom, and separately, did they examine the stain. On each occasion, their reactions had been identical; the inspection was never a lengthy scrutiny and the verdict given was that time and inattention would eradicate all traces of the tell-tale mark.

One night, deep in the cave of sleep, Evangeline awoke to the sensation of hot breath upon her neck and a cool hand against her waist. It was not an unusual occurrence to find herself woken by the closeness of her husband. But usually she did not feel the protuberance of her husband's member, the consequence of which was that her nightgown was rucked uncomfortably between her buttocks. Yet the pleasure gleaned from this most base of compliments outweighed her discomfort and she merely pulled the nightgown free and placed her hand on his. The hand felt different somehow, smaller and coarser. She marvelled at the differences one could detect when one's other senses were called to compensate for one's loss of sight. Evangeline had always thought that Henry possessed the refined hands of a gentleman, perhaps an aristocrat. But now, with only her nerve endings as a guide, the quantity of hair on her husband's palm took her by surprise. How remarkable that one could spend a considerable quantity of time engaged in intimate encounters and not know every feature on the landscape of one's lover in the finest detail.

They sat facing each other in the darkness and she felt as if everything was pulling her into herself, and as if the mysteries of life could somehow be solved inwardly and as if listening to her own wisdom was the key to life itself. As Evangeline's desire mounted, she felt sure that something beyond Henry, beyond this room, even beyond the earth, was somehow linked to this act which was never discussed. How confused she felt, yet she was aware of a profound clarity. Her longing for Henry was sharp and full, something so dense that she could almost hold it. Her entire body was alive with it and the sensation seemed to flow from a vortex which simultaneously strengthened and weakened her. Her whole being was a mass of swelling and ebbing and she felt as if time and history were of no consequence, captured in a tiny jar in the corner of the room.

She felt her husband's hand on her breast. He moved his fingers at first with only an infinitesimal gesture, one that seemed full of awe and lust. Her deeper breathing and forward thrust of her chest invited a deeper grasp, a less polite caress and Henry was eager to accept. Evangeline strained like a horse against its reins and she felt for Henry's free hand and placed it on her waiting breast. She felt a supreme freedom, as if she understood everything and as if the shame of mankind had never existed. She caressed her husband's arms and aligned her hand with his, apprenticed to the fingers which fondled her. She felt an intense pride in her body and felt entitled to heed the urge to revel in that pride and to nourish and savour her lust. She was aware of the carnal nature of her appetite, yet she refused to obey the tenets of modesty, reasoning that if her urges were natural and brought about such a blissful experience, then there must be something inherently sacred about the act of love.

As Henry fondled her, Evangeline ran her fingers lightly across her chest, thrilling at the smooth swelling of her own flesh. A soft utterance of appreciation came from Henry and she reached out to stroke his face. He seemed to flinch slightly but Evangeline found his mouth and she stroked his lips. His hands stilled and she sensed that his own had tensed, but she could not allow him to stop so she placed her hand on his and pushed upwards. She heard a long exhalation from Henry and she felt again the bittersweet ache in her hips. She moved her hand over her own body and delighted in her undulating contours. She did not know if Henry was aware of her exact movements, but at that point the pressure from his hands became firmer and his movements more urgent. Evangeline placed one hand on his, and with the other hand she felt herself again, this time stroking the deep cleft created by Henry's cupping motion. His fingers felt her movements and a frantic passion seemed to overcome him. He pushed his face against her and she felt his warm breath and the roughness of his skin against her finer flesh. His fingers traced hers and he urged her on, following her movements with his tongue. The shock of the contrast between the soft moistness of Henry's tongue and the coarseness of his cheek caused Evangeline to catch her breath. She gasped each time he followed a flick of his fingers with the deft workings of his tongue and finally she took one of Henry's hands and placed it between her legs, pressing it against herself and breathing "touch me here." Henry caressed her hips as she lowered herself and slowly brushed his fingers up and down the inside of her thighs. He pressed his

hand against the soft mound between her legs as if performing an act of worship, touching her with light strokes. He inserted one finger inside her and Evangeline supposed, with a fleeting thought, that his finger felt larger than usual only in proportion to her own swelling. He stroked his member against her and the novelty of the gesture, the combination of soft skin and rigid muscle, the animal grunting – all this was almost too much for Evangeline. She called out in ecstasy, her hips tilting upwards to reciprocate. She felt again the moistness of his tongue deep inside her.

Just as she sensed that he was savouring the taste of her, he sat upright and reached for her hand. He guided her hands over him, slowly moving along the length of him. Evangeline's body ached with such intensity that she cried out as much with pain as with longing. As if he sensed her urgent need, Henry entered her with a swift harshness which made Evangeline instinctively clasp him, curling round his body as if she were an animal protecting itself from an invading predator. Henry responded by thrusting deeper into her and grasping the flesh of each buttock. With each motion, Henry breathed her name into her neck and it seemed to Evangeline that, were it possible, he would both devour and be devoured by her. He smelled different somehow, too. She breathed in an earthy smell, as if he was the purest essence of maleness.

Evangeline whispered his name and in the muffled entanglement she thought she heard Henry's response as 'Edward,' but only much later would she think to ask him what he meant when he uttered what he surely had: "I would." For now, this puzzle remained in the pit of Evangeline's consciousness, obliterated temporarily by an eruption of ecstasy, a spontaneous unleashing, the like of which she had never before experienced.

Henry lay still, watching the prone figure of his wife. He estimated that Evangeline had fallen asleep in less than a minute, yet he felt restless and strangely energised. A thought was forming in his mind that was perhaps monstrous, yet exciting in its potential. He got up and went to the window, pausing to listen for any sign of rousing from the sleeping figure. The room was filled with the night's silent expectations and he knew Evangeline was in a deep slumber. He opened one curtain to allow the moonlight to infiltrate the room, inspecting first one hand then the other. It was merely good fortune that the hand Evangeline had touched had not been his right hand. Had it not been so, the night's proceedings may have

taken an unpleasant turn and one which may have been difficult, if not impossible, to resolve by conventional means. He acknowledged that he was now thinking of taking a step further away from what most may regard as an ethical approach to research and experimentation. Yet he remained convinced of his entitlement, as one committed to both scientific exploration and his personal convictions, to step outside of the boundaries of what one may call morality. In short, the end that his vision promised justified the means employed.

As for the monstrous but promising prospect, he realised that he needed to perfect this stage of experiments before he could develop its further implications. He knelt beside the bed and raised a hand to touch Evangeline's cheek. He checked himself just before his fingertip made contact with her skin, lowering his hand slowly to his lap, his eyes scanning her face carefully as if it may change when exposed to moonlight. He smiled suddenly, amused at the way the lights made Evangeline's face appear half-formed. He examined her hand, which was placed on the pillow. How delicate and chaste it looked, and devoid of life in the blanched cast of the moon. What a mass of contradictions was mankind, so capable of energetic feats and yet so easily depleted or extinguished. He studied Evangeline's neck, dappled; in the moonlight. With very little effort it could be broken and he was almost tempted to touch it and test how much pressure he could apply before she roused from her stupor. Do not be tempted to judge him for his thoughts alone, for Henry was not tempted to deliberately harm Evangeline. You must remember he is a man of learning and science and can no more be blamed for his inquisitive nature applied to a human anatomy than he may be hanged for taking apart a pocket watch to learn of its mechanism. Indeed, are we not all fascinated by matters relating to the human body? Of course, I am not Henry's advocate, I do not ask for your sympathy. I merely point out that Henry is a doctor like any other; the only difference is that I have bestowed upon you the rôle of *voyeur*.

Although I have just told you that Henry would not deliberately harm his wife, we cannot pretend that you are unaware that, whatever the intent, Henry has certainly caused injury to Evangeline. But here in this room, watching the sleeping form of his wife, nothing could be further from this man's mind. He felt closer to her than ever; free of words, free of judgment, yoked together and dormant in the night's inertia. He looked at the clock and realised that the sun would soon start to rise. He went to the window, lowered himself to

the floor and sat with his back against the wall. He could only see a vague impression of Evangeline, which caused a sudden, strong desire to see her in vivid detail. He closed his eyes and there she was, in a dress of regal purple, her eyes shining and the rich depth of her laughter causing his heart to swell. She reached out to him but to his horror her hand merely went deeper inside him, until her arm had disappeared to the elbow. Her face was a mask of bitter disappointment, as she realised the extent of his absence and betrayal. Yet she continued to root around inside the blackness he had become, fumbling for something lost. His eyes snapped open as a flow of nausea was accompanied by intense rage. He forced himself to slow his breathing, placing both hands on the floor to steady himself. Calmer after a few moments, the rage handed its sceptre to a sadness which overtook him. Henry held his head in his hands and forced his mind to focus on the task. He stood and closed the curtains, the heavy drapery denying entry to the sun as a stern parent dampens the enthusiasm of a child. He dressed minimally and made his way to the laboratory, aware that his steps were growing increasingly heavier.

The idea which had earlier seemed so monstrous had been filtered through several layers of reason and justification, so that by the time Henry began his modifications to the most recent version of the formula, he saw only the magnificence of its potential. The side-effects of this bud on the branch of his experiment would be minimal and any question of ethical doubt must be put into context. He imagined Hastie Lanyon puffing and reddening with indignation but the thought merely put a smirk on Henry's face and determination in his heart. He worked with ease and efficiency, oblivious to the waking world outside the room. He could not be sure to the point of certainty of the final outcome, but this potion would be enough to indicate the progression of his experiment with the advantage of being, for once, the observer instead of the subject. Henry held the glass vessel up to eye-level as he anticipated the positive results to come. Certain that he had done all he could at this stage, he checked both the time and his appearance. He consulted the mirror for a second opinion in case there were signs of his deeds but his looking glass approved so he made his way back to the bedroom hoping he would not have to wait too long.

*

Henry found himself being gently woken by Evangeline, who was sitting on the bed fully dressed and looking as though she had been at her business for hours. He gave the outward appearance of being the attentive husband as his wife spoke to him, but the inward alarm and anger he felt towards himself had stopped his ears to all but his internal monologue. He was plotting, with desperation, an alternative plan, which had almost hatched, until a rather sharp 'Henry' from Evangeline postponed the final, liberating crack in the egg.

"Darling, I'm sorry," he said, eager not say or do anything which may jeopardise compliance on her part. "I have been up all night attending to a puzzle which must be solved, while the best ideas were fresh in my mind."

"Oh, I see." Evangeline considered this for rather longer than Henry deemed necessary.

"Is something wrong?" For a moment, Henry imagined that Evangeline had pretended to be in a deep sleep and then followed him to his laboratory where she proceeded to observe most of his movements and musings, finally returning to the bedroom in plenty of time to remain unobserved and undetected herself. But that idea was fanciful in the extreme, if only because Henry had never known anybody to be as fond of sleep as his wife.

"Oh no, dear," Evangeline patted Henry's arm and smiled. "I just find it slightly disconcerting when things occur in such close proximity to me, yet I have no knowledge of them."

Henry laughed, with a combination of relief, amusement at the many foibles of human nature and delight at the candid nature of Evangeline. She would have made a most excellent scientist, if only she desisted from investing so much faith in the essential decency of mankind.

Evangeline laughed in response. "Well, never mind about that now, I must get on with the day. Why don't you stay and sleep, you look dreadful darling." She kissed him on the forehead and the smell of her (a natural scent combined with potent gardenia), aroused him, although the arousal was partly fuelled by a sense of his thwarted scheme. He pulled her hand and brought it to his lips.

“You look exquisite enough for both of us. May a husband enquire as to the business of his wife’s activities for the day” His alarm had dissipated in the awareness that his plan must simply be postponed, rather than reviewed.

“Oh darling, you would not be in the slightest bit interested, it is all frivolous women’s stuff.” If Henry had not been so aroused he may have noticed that the coquettish nature of Evangeline’s smile was not at all characteristic of her. As it was, in his current state he interpreted the smile in relation to his own desire and state of mind and never imagined that hers was of an entirely different nature.

For Evangeline, knowing that tonight was the usual evening for Henry’s sojourn to his club, had made plans of her own. She was to visit the ladies in Walmer, having realised that, in the aftermath of a prolonged illness suffered by Agnes, Lydia may end up entirely alone. The letters to and from Lydia over the years had cemented in Evangeline’s mind the truth that Henry’s sister was not deficient in any way and that, regardless of Henry’s motives, it was nothing short of tragic to disown one’s only sibling.

A fresh idea had formed in Henry’s mind, his enthusiasm for the original scheme not dampened by the rationality which so often calms the mind after sleep. Fiendish though the plot undoubtedly was he felt sure that the results themselves would be the justification for the method.

“Must you leave now? I was hoping we could have lunch together.”

“Why Henry, that’s splendid! I had planned to have lunch at home before I left for –” She realised in time the blunder she had been about to make.

Henry was too immersed in his own mind and the anticipation of success to notice that Evangeline had left her sentence unfinished. He sprung from the bed and kissed his wife before washing and dressing.

At the dining table Evangeline chatted to Henry with no other purpose than avoiding the subject of her plans for the day. Henry’s unexpected lunch plans had caused great trouble for the cook, who had been very inventive in conjuring a spread composed from yesterday’s leftovers and tomorrow’s dinner, yet Henry showed little interest in the food placed in front

of them. Evangeline found herself picking at salmon, pea soup, chicken, jelly, forcemeat balls and plum pudding, chatting of nothing of any substance and wondering why Henry had suggested that they take lunch together.

“Are you not hungry?”

“I am dining at the club this evening.”

“We should have saved Mrs. Munby such toil, there is far too much food. Is something troubling you Henry?”

“Not at all, darling – why?”

“You seem to be watching me intently, I wondered if there was something on your mind?”

“I had not realised,” he smiled. “Although I must say you look particularly ravishing.”

Evangeline smiled in response, but couldn’t help feeling that Henry was preoccupied. She took a sip of her drink and wondered if she had somehow aroused his suspicion.

“Is something on *your* mind?”

Evangeline blinked, trying to remember if she had said anything which hinted at her plans for the rest of the day.

“No, darling, on the contrary, I feel quite content.”

“It’s just that you frowned.”

“Did I?” She thought for a moment. “Yes I did. The drink tasted peculiar, that’s all.”

“I see.”

“Though it could be the food that’s imparted the peculiar flavour.”

Henry took a sip of his drink. “Yes it must be that.”

Evangeline took another sip and once again frowned. “I rather think it isn’t the food.”

Henry passed his drink to Evangeline. "Here, have mine. I have had enough and it isn't bitter in the slightest." In fact it was just as bitter; Henry had dissolved the powders in both glasses and not taken a sip, despite appearances to the contrary. He had made sure to concoct enough of the formula should Evangeline drink the water, the lime juice or the raspberry cordial and ensured that he was able to implement the first step of his plan without danger of being observed either by his wife or the servants.

Evangeline had a taste, savouring the liquid for a few moments. "It must be something in the food, Henry, as this drink tastes slightly bitter too. I will try the lime juice."

The juice evidently had sufficiently strong flavour to withstand the bitterness of the draft, for Evangeline drank without complaint and Henry listened to his wife's chatter without interruption for the next few minutes, watching carefully and surreptitiously taking notes as the formula took effect. Evangeline transformed before his very eyes, if not into an unpleasant *alter ego*, certainly a less civilised version of herself. She seemed at the mercy of her emotions, quite unable to control them fully and seemingly at the mercy of every whim that entered her mind. She would switch her attention from one focus to another, one moment talking of something entirely trivial and the next raising a philosophical conundrum. Henry allowed her free rein with her speech and action, taking care neither to lead nor to suggest nor to curtail anything she said or did, including one alarming episode of cartwheeling the full breadth of the dining room rug, after which she slumped back in her chair and laid her head on the dining table. Henry assumed she was napping, but she soon sat bolt upright and began chatting again with renewed vigour. At one point her laughter was so boisterous and shrill that the maid came knocking at the door to enquire if the doctor and his wife were all right.

"This luncheon cloth, Henry," Evangeline said, pulling at it crossly, "I do not like it, it is silly."

"Silly, darling?"

"Yes, silly. Silly and stupid. I want one with elephants on it." She then sprang from her chair and skipped towards Henry, sitting on his lap with more force than was necessary. She stroked his face and kicked her legs while singing a nursery rhyme.

Evangeline's antics went on for some time, Henry intrigued by the fact that his wife seemed to do nothing which would provoke any response other than concern or irritation. Mostly she would oscillate between innocent girlishness and lasciviousness to an extent which meant that Henry had to focus intently on the purpose of the experiment, lest he become distracted into other activities. She seemed entirely unaware of the passage of time, only picking up the mantel clock to throw at Henry to play catch and not once enquiring after the hour. After a few hours, having requested that they weren't disturbed again, Evangeline fell into a deep slumber and Henry carried her to bed. He left her fully clothed but laid a bedspread over her, and retired to his study to conclude his notes.

When Evangeline awoke and went to find Henry, she knew from the light outside that it was much too late to go to Walmer. Henry was in the drawing room, greeting her cheerily and scribbling notes just as she remembered he had been before she fell asleep. Usually when the early evening light shone through into the room, she would stand at the window and bask in its warmth, but today the pain in her head seemed to intensify when she looked towards the window. She sat facing away from the light and waited for Henry to finish writing. Finally he looked at her and smiled.

"You were sleeping so soundly I didn't wish to wake you. I hope it wasn't an urgent engagement?"

"It wasn't." She attempted a responding smile but her mouth could only manage a weak upturn and the effort brought fresh pain to her temples.

"Are you feeling unwell, darling? The sleep seems not to have refreshed you sufficiently."

Evangeline sighed. "Henry, I feel perfectly awful. Really, I think I must have eaten a wretched morsel. If I didn't know better, I would think your abstinence meant that you knew something I didn't. Perhaps you are in cahoots with the Mrs. Munby to see me off."

Henry chuckled. "I am pleased to see that you are not so indisposed that your humour has departed."

Evangeline watched her husband, wondering when he would raise the matter of her behaviour at lunchtime. Perhaps he imagined that she had quite forgotten, or was unaware of, her conduct in the hours preceding her sleep and did not wish to embarrass her. Yet it seemed odd that, as a doctor, he was evidently unperturbed by her behaviour and by the coincidental fact that she now felt quite unwell.

“Henry, I am most anxious about what has happened yet you seem not in the slightest bit puzzled about today’s turn of events.”

Henry’s response was calm and considered. “I thought it had been established that you must’ve eaten something disagreeable.”

She felt slighted at his tone and lack of concern. “Of course, but I am more anxious about the way I behaved than the fact that I feel unwell. In fact, you have not asked of me the symptoms. It may be that I am more unwell than I look. After all, my behaviour earlier was certainly out of character and most extreme. Do you not think I should be examined by a doctor?”

Henry laughed. “Darling, I think I am more than a substitute for a sawbones. If I thought for a moment you were seriously ill I would of course take immediate action.”

“But Henry, I behaved dreadfully!”

“Darling, what do you mean? You were merely unwell and then slept for a few hours.”

“Henry. We both know I am talking of my bizarre behaviour at lunch, some of which I blush to even recollect.”

Henry looked at her with a kind expression. “I would guess that what you recollect happened in your dreams, no doubt brought upon by whatever noxious strain was in some of the food. Of course, it could have been something you ate at breakfast.”

Evangeline looked at her husband with an expression of such pained bewilderment that Henry felt a vague pang of guilt. He had not intended to tell a lie of such proportions, yet the idea had presented itself at short notice and with such appeal that before he had time to

think of the mental anguish such a lie may cause for Evangeline, the falsehood had dripped from his lips and it could not be undone. He was not unaware of the damage to a relationship marred by mendacity, but this was assuredly an exception. The rules did not apply in such an instance and the whole purpose of his work placed the procedures taken outside of any ordinary circumstances to which, naturally, considerations of decency applied. He had never before lied to Evangeline, and he never again would.

Evangeline still appeared troubled, but she relaxed in her chair with a resigned sigh.

“I must say, I am relieved that it was a dream. But I have to tell you Henry, I have never before had such lively visions during sleep.”

“It is not uncommon to have more vivid dreams when you are unwell, particularly if you have eaten something which has brought on some sort of hallucination.”

Evangeline studied him carefully and Henry wished he had not been so verbose in his desire to persuade her of her error.

“I am sure you of all people know of such things. Please don’t stay at home this evening for my sake, I’m sure I will soon recover completely.” She wished to write immediately to Agnes and Lydia to explain her absence.

When Henry was safely away at his club, Evangeline began her letter with the intention of posting it herself in the morning. Yet with each fresh sentence her head hearkened to the misgivings in her heart. An idea blossomed so fully in her mind that she was obliged to keep the letter uncharacteristically short and to the point. She raced to the kitchen, shaking the poor cook by the shoulders to ascertain which of the food served at lunch, if any, had been thrown away. Mrs. Munby’s stammered excuses were waved away with a promise that she was not in trouble of any sort, and Evangeline interrupted her convoluted explanations with a sudden ejaculation.

“Aha! Never mind, this will do.” She grabbed two jugs which were still half filled with lime water and raspberry cordial, amidst the cook’s protests that they were to be thrown away.

"Please, don't concern yourself," Evangeline put down the jugs and laid a gentle hand on the cook's arm. "I merely wish to use the contents for...for...I won't be drinking any of it, and you really aren't in any trouble."

"Did the doctor ask you to fetch it?" Mrs. Munby looked wary and Evangeline wondered at the cause of her suspicion.

"Yes, he did."

"Oh Mrs. Jekyll, I am sorry you were unwell, but I am certain I took every precaution with hygiene." She was wringing her hands, so Evangeline took them both in hers and smiled.

"I will strike a bargain with you. If you say nothing of the matter to Dr. Jekyll, I will say I dropped the jugs and spilled the entire contents."

Mrs. Munby looked as if she had been spared severe punishment, but Evangeline's urgency was too great to allow any feelings of guilt for the deception. She asked the puzzled cook for two jam jars and took these and the jugs to her room, where she poured the contents from the jugs into the jars and dressed to set off for Dr. Lanyon's house. She did not want to bother Henry with the matter, but her mind had not been put at rest at all by his smooth explanation. She remained convinced that she had not dreamed the stuff she had remembered, yet she knew there was no reason for Henry to create such a heinous deception. Yet she also knew two things from the years of friendship between the Jekyll and the Lanyons: firstly, that Hastie Lanyon could be relied on to take seriously Evangeline's concerns, and secondly that he was the very soul of discretion. Dr. Lanyon was not at home when Evangeline called, so the jars, an explanatory note in a sealed envelope, and strict instructions were left with the butler. On her return home the maid offered a light supper but Evangeline had neither the wish nor stomach for food and she retired to bed early.

Two days later, a letter arrived for the attention of Mrs. Jekyll. Its contents explained that, although the concoction would not under any circumstance have proved fatal, the traces of arsenic suggested cause for alarm and further investigation. Dr. Lanyon asked if Evangeline would like him to visit and ask Henry how the arsenic came to be in the drinks, seeing as "undoubtedly the arsenic had found its way into the jugs via Jekyll's cabinets." Evangeline

found this odd, seeing as the servants could feasibly have acquired the substance, but she put this down to the vagaries of an old man, especially as she knew that both she and Henry had drunk from the same source. Regardless of how the arsenic found its way to Evangeline, she knew now that something was afoot and she resolved to catch the culprit. The principal candidate on which her suspicions had alighted was Poole. The man seemed almost unnaturally loyal to Henry and protective of his master to the point of occasional hostility towards Evangeline. Or maybe she had imagined such traits; after all, it was understandable if he was constantly trying to prove himself worthy to restore his family name. But if not Poole, then who? Who would do such a thing, and in so blatant a fashion?

It was just past a week after the original incident and Evangeline had spent the days creeping as silently as a thief and keeping watch as diligently as a spy. She had left the house one morning for the purpose of a social visit but her friend, despite it being her usual morning at home and having left no note with any of the servants, had gone out. Since nobody knew where she was and therefore when she would return, Evangeline decided to go home. As she crossed the lobby into the entrance hall, someone was coming down the stairs. She waited at the foot of the stairs and Henry came into view, his face a picture of surprise when he saw his wife.

“Darling, you’re home,” he gave a bright but insincere smile. “I thought you were out until lunchtime.” He hurriedly stuffed both hands in his pockets, brought them out again and kissed Evangeline.

“Henrietta was not in. I do hope nothing is wrong, nobody knows where she is.” Evangeline had caught a glimpse of brown paper and wondered why Henry thought he must be so surreptitious with whatever he had been holding.

“Gallivanting, no doubt,” Henry smiled.

Evangeline frowned. “You are dreadfully rude about her sometimes, I have no idea what she done that could possibly have offended you, Henry.”

Henry laughed. “You’re too kind. She hasn’t offended me in the least, I just find her rather...fluffy.”

Evangeline laughed despite herself. She then shook her head. "Henry, such ignobility does not become you. She and her husband are *terribly* nice people."

"I'm sure they are nice. I'm sure they are the nicest of nice people. The very pinnacle of niceness. Anyone can be nice, Evangeline, it's not an accomplishment."

Evangeline stared at her husband. Sometimes she did not know what came over him. What was wrong with being nice?

"Actually, Henry, I think being nice *is* rather an achievement. I frequently find it rather difficult to be nice and invariably feel better when I have chosen to be nice when it was far less effort to be unpleasant."

"What do you mean you feel better?" He seemed to be sneering.

"I mean I feel better, Henry. More virtuous, more honourable. If I'm unpleasant and I know I could have tried a bit harder to be nice, I always feel bad about myself. For instance, you are evidently finding it far easier at this very moment to be less than nice."

Henry stared at her. He was too irritated now to give a direct response.

Evangeline sighed. "There are occasions when I find myself in conversations with you and I marvel at how we come to be at certain junctures. If you'll excuse me, I am going to read for a while before lunch." She moved towards the dining room but Henry gently took her arm.

"I'm sorry, Evangeline. I apologise for my rudeness towards you, and about your friend. It is no excuse, but my work is making me quite bad-tempered at present. I find the Bartletts inconsequential people, it is true, but they are perfectly harmless and nice people. It was unkind of me, do you forgive me?"

"Darling, of course I forgive you," she kissed Henry and patted his arm. "You must allow for the fact that not everyone feels that their purpose in life is to achieve something great; some people are deliriously happy living their nice, inconsequential lives and I, for one, would rather be around people who never achieve anything but never offend me, than around those whose accomplishments are impressive but whose manners are deplorable."

Henry gave a gracious nod and Evangeline continued, "Henrietta is rather 'fluffy,' that is a perfectly correct assessment, and, yes, Frederick is rather...well, not all husbands are the *honnête homme* that captured my heart. But, Henry, they are my friends – they are *your* friends – and I am glad of them."

"I am suitably chastised." Henry gave a small bow. "I'm afraid I won't join you for lunch, I shall be in my study working on this infernal project and cultivating a more pleasant temper."

Henry went upstairs and Evangeline entered the dining room. She was surprised to see the drinks jugs on the table so far in advance of lunch. What on earth was Mrs. Munby thinking? She made her way to the kitchen and found the cook at the roasting jack, red-faced and flustered.

The cook gave a start at the sight of her mistress.

"Oh, Mrs. Jekyll," she breathed, placing a hand to her heart. "You did give me a turn, I didn't know you were in the house."

"I returned a lot earlier than expected. Is there a reason the jugs are on the table so early?"

"I don't know, Madam," was the cook's indifferent reply, "the doctor asked for them to be put out as soon as possible." She resumed the more important business of basting the meat.

"I see." Evangeline stood still, an unwelcome thought creeping across her mind.

Mrs. Munby gave Evangeline a quizzical look. "Did I misunderstand Dr. Jekyll's instructions?"

"It's likely the misunderstanding is on my part," Evangeline replied, but her tone was absent-minded and the cook was not placated.

"I can make some fresh if you wish."

“Really, there’s no need. Dr. Jekyll has some peculiar idiosyncracies, but I’m sure he has some lofty purpose in mind.” She forced a smile and hoped that her talent for false sincerity was greater than Henry’s.

It was another fortnight before the mystery was to be solved and by that time Evangeline had almost forgotten the entire affair, having reasoned that the most logical explanation should have been arrived at far sooner. Why Lanyon had not written to this effect she did not know, but she supposed these inordinately clever men had to say something substantial to justify all those theories and experiments. Still, she blamed herself entirely. Her mind had instantly looked for the most dastardly interpretation, yet she knew of so many cases of accidental arsenic poisoning thanks to a chaotic kitchen. She had resolved to help Mrs. Munby better organise the kitchen and to consult with Henry about the possibility of taking on another maid so that the cleaning could be shared between Hope and the new girl, leaving Mrs. Munby free of any household chores other than the preparation of meals.

At dinner that evening Henry asked Evangeline to fetch the Burges brooch as he was to meet the following day with Mr. Watherston from the insurance company, who required an updated inventory of all jewellery. Evangeline was puzzled as to why the brooch was an issue, seeing as it was a wedding present and had been included on the insurance documents for several years. Apparently some important details had been missed from the most recent documents and Henry needed the brooch. Evangeline left the dining room but paused at the stairs, recalling that the brooch had been left at her parents’ house one evening. She returned to the dining room and as soon as entered, her hand still on the door knob, her eyes alighted on the unfamiliar objects which Henry had evidently placed on the table in her absence. He had seemed surprised at first, but then composed himself and seemed intent on behaving as if nothing untoward had occurred.

“Do you have the brooch?”

Evangeline continued to stare in disbelief at the sight before her. On the table, beside her wine glass, lay several wrappers, two of which had been opened to reveal their contents of white crystals. In Henry’s left hand was a phial half-full of a liquid, deep red in colour and emitting a vaporous mist. Evangeline looked at Henry and looked again at the table, imagining for a moment that they were part of some ghastly tableau. Finally her hand

moved to her mouth in an involuntary gesture and her eyes filled with tears. A wave of nausea washed over her and she steadied herself on a chair.

“It was you,” she whispered, her head bent low and a tear splashing onto the chair.

“Evangeline, whatever is the matter? What do you mean it was me?” He placed the phial on the table and touched her arm tenderly. “You look unwell, perhaps you should rest.”

Her head snapped up and she looked at him with contempt. “Can you in all conscience treat me this way, Henry? Will you pile insult upon injury? I -” She began to take deep breaths and sat heavily on the chair. She looked again at the incriminating paraphernalia before them, staring intently as if she hoped they would disappear with the power of her wishes. Suddenly overcome by rage, she swiped everything within range from the table to the floor, causing Henry to recoil.

“Evangeline, please, you must-”

“Do not dare, Henry!” Evangeline stood, her tremulous hands raised in a defensive gesture.

“Darling, please just allow me to explain.” Henry had always intended to present Evangeline with an explanation, but he had not expected to find himself having to do so at this stage, and in these circumstances.

Evangeline gave a derisive laugh. “Of what benefit do you think your explanation will be? Do you imagine that once you have given a satisfactory explanation we are to go about our days as gaily as if this abomination had never taken place?”

Henry blinked and was silent for a few moments. “Actually, Evangeline, I do. Do you not trust that what has happened is merely part of the greater good that I am doing?”

Evangeline felt, for a few moments, as if her whole being was melting. Surely the hand of fate was not so cruel as to bestow upon her life such a miserable turn of events. Surely her husband of some years, a man she loved and admired greatly, was not justifying without apology the monstrosity he had committed against his wife. She stood up feebly and Henry

attempted to assist her but she pushed him aside, leaving the room. She wandered around the house, her thoughts as swarming insects, each in turn stinging her mind. As she reeled from room to room, her intention having not yet crystallised to a definite purpose, Henry followed his wife and tried to explain his actions. Although Evangeline sensed the sincerity of Henry's words, his explanation served only to harden her heart and her resolve. That he was on the verge of establishing definitive proof that the more undesirable traits could be eradicated from oneself was of no comfort to her.

"Do you not see what you have done?"

"What I have done, Evangeline, is to create a means of relieving human misery which will benefit almost everyone. Do *you* not see what I have done? Yes, of course, I will concede that it was not the *morally* ideal way to perfect the formula, but I had no choice. It was not practical to persist in attempting to observe the results on myself, do you not see? And I had to use somebody I trusted fully. Evangeline, I urge you to see past the offence and look towards the final implication."

Evangeline stopped pacing and stood facing Henry, her hands on her hips.

"I think you have revealed the final implication, Henry, but you do not see it."

"What do you mean?"

"In exploiting your trust in me, you ruined my own in yourself." She proceeded to leave the room, but Henry took hold of her arm.

"Evangeline, please, be reasonable. I am sorry I've caused you upset, truly I am, but will you not consider the matter from my point of view?"

"While you refuse to consider the matter from mine? I think not, Henry. You have abused me terribly and you continue to deny the fact by omission."

Henry continued to follow Evangeline around the house, but his wife had now made up her mind. She found his very presence abhorrent, yet her anger prevented her from taking precise action. Still she moved from room to room, the house having taken on an oppressive air. The flickering of the firelight conjured menacing shadows on the furniture and the roof

that seemed to mock her. Strange shapes loomed over them and cast over Henry an ominous pall which obscured one half of him. Finally an immediate decision came to Evangeline and she left Berkeley Square amidst desperate pleas from Henry.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

It was one of those dry, fine mornings when one does not mind the whispered rumours of colder weather. Sunshine, however much she chose to gad about with Jack Frost, always put one in a mood of hope and good cheer.

Evangeline had awoken in a spirit of renewed resolve. In that manner common to many, the black of the night had found her in a low and self-pitying humour, one that presented to her inner eye a drained, dull vision of her future: either she would marry again, but this time to a dependable, but rather flat fellow, one whose star shines less brilliantly than Henry's but which remains as a fixed and dependable constellation; or she would never marry again, forswearing her eligibility and brandishing her lone passage through life as a martyr's crown. Both options lacked any redeeming feature and Evangeline had inwardly shuddered. Why did Providence mock her? Was there some lesson she should have learned? Would the local children be weaned on tales of the beautiful maiden who married Prince Charming, who in turn proved to be in fact a beast? She could not contemplate the miserable events foretold by her imagination, but neither could she foresee an alternative vision of her destiny. Her crumbled marriage and the conflicting emotions she felt for Henry were, in the daylight hours, mostly unacknowledged and accepted as a by-product of a necessary act, rather like the horse muck on the city streets. But when night drew its black cloak around the city, Evangeline felt a visceral longing for Henry, a yearning to be enveloped in him, ravished by him, consumed by their mutual passion.

It had long been a habit of Evangeline's to open the window wide and contemplate the moon. She fancied that the lunar being was pale not because of any natural origin, but because many such as herself had drawn on its energy. She had always thought of the moon as the more benevolent sister of the sun, giving silent counsel to those who sought her tranquil company. But since she had left Henry, she could no longer bear to open her window and be mocked by the taunts of the dark sky and the rolling fog, which only reminded her of the opacity of her own naïve faculties. She fancied the giant glowing pearl outside to be the mother of the infants who lay in a box in her dressing table drawer, strung

together to further mock her loneliness and remind her whose hands had fastened the clasp and whose lips had joined the moon in softly kissing her neck.

This morning, with its brusque sweep of bright sunshine to vanquish the dust of sentimentality, had at first brought a flush of shame to Evangeline's cheek. When the night had brought unspeakable horrors to those less fortunate than herself, she really had no business to brood and mourn as a medieval lady in her tower. Although she had no intention of giving them up, she made a mental note to attempt a greater degree of detachment when she next read her grim tales. It would not do to become a Miss Havisham, forever a slave to your broken heart and defined by a man who is soon to be a mere spectre in one's present life. No, Evangeline had much life in her and if there was any sin she gave credence to it was the sin of a wasted life spent weeping over "the milk that is spilled," as her mother would say.

After a breakfast at which her father remarked that he had never seen such a display of hearty appetite in neither man nor beast, Evangeline took Smout, Lillith and Biondetta for a walk, heading for the Regent's Park. After twenty minutes, which had not seen her progress very far due to all the patting her dogs refused to reject, Evangeline's mood had mellowed into one of philosophical musings. The sun was still bright and the trees remained still, as if in a basking stupor. But several gentleman had greeted her in an appreciative manner, something which had always happened but until now had not penetrated her consciousness with any lasting impression. But at this time, when nothing had changed and everything had changed, the subtle attentions of a gentleman seemed so loaded with complexities that she felt a hot anger at Henry, and at life itself. Why had life given Henry all manner of charms and blessings, only to chain to those gifts the heaviest of curses? Or had Henry been bestowed with such good fortune that he was ill-equipped to fend off the inevitable curses that fall across the path of all? Had he been more deprived in his beginnings, would the glimpsed upward trajectory of his soul have been as strived for as that of his outer life? Evangeline began to feel impatient and vexed at the thought of being haunted by the ghost of her marriage wherever she went. Would she ever again enjoy the simple pleasure of a stroll without being accosted by sharp memories which appeared as a dagger through a silk curtain?

Evangeline was sure she had not inadvertently tugged on her lead, but Biondetta had stopped quite abruptly and was regarding her mistress with a doleful gaze and a whine. Smout was at first oblivious to her fellow canine's plight, her attention caught by a rather haughty looking poodle some distance behind them. But when she saw that she was missing some affection from her mistress, she too began to whine until Evangeline made room for her and engaged in some vociferous petting. Biondetta became immersed in the ecstasy of Evangeline's scratching, stroking and fussing, while Smout and Lillith waited patiently for their turn. But somewhere in the melee of begging paws and velveteen stomachs, Evangeline felt awash with grief. It was as if someone had crept unnoticed and tipped a pail of intense melancholy over her, emptying the vessel so that every part of her was soaked in misery. Her tears came despite her resistance so she kept her head down and continued the petting motion in rather a more frenzied manner than was usual. Smout pushed her nose against her mistress and whined louder than before. Evangeline turned towards Biondetta, threw her arms around the animal's neck and buried her face in the thick fur. She sobbed as she clung to her pet, Smout placing a concerned paw on her and Lillith taking shelter in the cave between Biondetta's legs.

Once the sobbing had subsided and Evangeline had composed herself, she realised that an observer may have regarded her actions as a bizarre and excessive display of affection towards her dog, equal in its impropriety to a public display of grief. As she was gathering her skirts and her thoughts, a gentle smile on her face as she pondered the comic nature of what had just happened, she heard a timid "Mrs Jekyll?" behind her. Turning toward the reticent voice, she saw Hope, who was wearing an expression which, on any other occasion, Evangeline would have found amusing. On this occasion, Evangeline was embarrassed to no small degree that Hope's wide eyes and lips pursed so that they were on the verge of twitching, indicated that the young servant had witness a good deal of Evangeline's consternation.

Although Evangeline had considerable affection for Hope, she was not comfortable with the knowledge that somebody – *anybody* – had seen her in such a state of naked despair. It was also quite impossible that she confide in anyone the entire sordid details behind the hideous burst of emotions which had presented itself unbidden to Evangeline. For her despair, you understand, was not simply self-pity or a loss of the ideals of romance, or even a sense of

humiliation. She felt that Henry had adulterated her entire being: mind and body had been subjected to a monstrous violation, soul had been wholly invaded. She was unspeakably angry with Henry and horrified at his completed abandonment of respect, trust and principles. What good were a world of scientific discoveries if, along the way, one's humanity was sold in exchange?

Evangeline gave a bright smile and exclaimed "Hope! How lovely to see you. How are matters at the Women's Guild? I have been unwell for some time, but as you can see I'm well now and I intend to resume the meetings from next week."

Hope's returning smile was faltering. "Some matters have been resolved, madam. Others...well...you know how it is. Are you all right, Mrs Jekyll? I...you seemed upset, that's all."

"Indeed I was, Hope. Biondetta, you see, she hurt her leg and seemed in some pain." She gave a vague gesture towards the dog as if this would convince Hope of the truth of this explanation. Hope, who of course would no more question Evangeline than Evangeline would admit she was lying, nevertheless betrayed her thoughts through her flickering eyes, her tight smile and her silence. Evangeline felt she had no choice but to press the matter further.

"Apparently she was in no pain at all. So fond of melodrama aren't you, darling?" She stroked and petted her scapegoat, hoping that Biondetta realised this was an apology. The dog, caring not at all to have been exploited, gave a short bark and nudged Evangeline's hand with her nose.

"I really must be going, Hope." She smiled at the other woman, but Hope looked crestfallen.

"I do not want to speak out of turn, madam, but the doctor seems very unhappy and the entire household grieves your absence."

An unwelcome surge of emotions threatened to unravel Evangeline's breezy exterior. She blinked to suppress the tears, but the unexpected shrillness of her voice contradicted her choice of words "You are very sweet to say such things and I know you speak with a

kindness of heart, but there is no question of my return to Berkeley Square. I am truly sorry to tell you, but I cannot raise your...your hope!" She laughed in a slightly hysterical tone and wondered if the effects of Henry's mischievous potion had not quite dissipated.

Hope's eyes threatened tears and Evangeline felt suddenly maternal towards the girl, despite their age differences being more those of siblings.

"I am truly sorry, Hope, but the situation became intolerable and I have no faith that -" here Evangeline looked upwards as if seeking celestial guidance. "I do not believe there will be significant changes to encourage my return."

Hope looked down with an air of defeat but resigned acceptance. "Mr Hyde does not bother us of course, but I can see that he may have been unwelcome."

It took a few seconds for Hope's words to be processed by Evangeline but they had no meaning, no matter how hard she tried to understand. Hope mistook Evangeline's confusion for disapproval and inwardly reproached herself. She averted her eyes and moved away from Evangeline, muttering words of polite remorse.

Evangeline reached out to the young woman and said "Hope, wait. I must ask that you explain yourself, for I am ignorant of the details of this Mr.."

"Hyde, madam," Hope said quietly, for she was relieved that Evangeline's demeanour had been one of confusion rather than offence. She in turn became confused: how could Mrs Jekyll possibly be confused? The household had been told the man's name therefore it was inconceivable that the mistress of the house was unaware of this detail. A tragic thought entered her mind: what if the rumours were true and the master had indeed struck her? When Mrs Jekyll had fallen down the stairs and the poor infant had been lost, perhaps the doctor had caused unseen injuries. Perhaps madam had lost some of her faculties. It was too terrible to contemplate, but what other explanation was there when the name Hyde apparently meant nothing to Mrs Jekyll, yet the household had known of his existence for some time? He had been a visitor to the house long before the mistress left and it made no sense that she was claiming to have no knowledge of him.

“Hope my dear, you look quite stricken with alarm and I do not wish to cause further distress to you, but perhaps we have confused each other and there is a very simple solution to this conundrum. Explain to me, if you will, what you mean by this Mr Hyde not being welcomed by me.”

Hope was beginning to feel a sense of dread. She simply *knew* that something unpleasant was afoot when that gentleman appeared at the house. There was something horrible about him, although she could not be exact about its nature. None of the servants understood why Dr Jekyll allowed him such freedom, even if he evidently had never been extended an offer to dine with his friend. But Poole – loyal and discreet where his master was concerned – would not stand for any gossip or rumour-mongering, so there was never much opportunity to speculate about the mysterious visitor. And now it had come to this, a broken marriage that would not, or could not, be repaired. And a conversation she should not be having because it was not her place to discuss such matters. But she opened her silly mouth because she could not bear the thought of Mrs Jekyll being so unhappy and because she knew how men worked. If Mrs Jekyll did not come back, the doctor would find himself a new wife, a woman who may not be as kind and cheerful and warm-hearted as this Mrs Jekyll. *Well, that will teach me to be selfish. I wanted madam to come back to make me happy and now I may make madam even more miserable and lose my employ, thanks to my loose tone.*

“Hope, please look at me,” Evangeline implored. “I give you my word that nobody shall be told of our conversation, if that is the concern which stops your tongue.”

Hope looked into Evangeline’s eyes, wishing neither to withhold anything from her nor to impart any information which could cause serious trouble of any sort.

Evangeline continued “I give you my solemn oath that you will suffer no consequences. But I believe my husband to be in some sort of danger and, if so, I am better placed to help him, absent from the household as I presently am.”

Upon the word ‘danger’ being heard, Hope’s eyes widened to such an extent that Evangeline became momentarily concerned that an ocular injury would occur. She fought to suppress the irritation she felt whenever fear pushed someone off course. She had an urge

to take Hope by her shoulders and shake from her the information which must be divulged. Her mind spun with theories of alternative explanations. Was it this Hyde scoundrel who had administered the potion to her, unknown to Henry? Perhaps Henry, for some opaque reasons, had accepted the blame rather than divulge the identity and nature of this Hyde fellow. Her thoughts went further than wild speculation. While she told herself she could not conjure truth from suspicion, in her heart Evangeline believed that this Mr Hyde was somehow woven into the tapestry of Henry's secret family history.

She fought against her thoughts, loud and clamouring like street urchins, in order that she may question Hope in a manner which would point the way to a path down which would lie the answers. Of course, Evangeline could just walk away. She could tell herself that Henry in all likelihood was too mentally troubled for one such as her who lacked the professional ability to be able to solve the problem, or even to aid Henry in finding a way out of his self-made labyrinth. Yet, despite her caution, she felt that Henry must be dreadfully unhappy. If she put to one side her own sense of injury and her wounded pride, it was clear to her that, as good a wife as she had tried to be, a person could not perform the miracle of making another individual happy, however intertwined their lives or destinies. She felt inclined to try and rescue Henry, though she knew not yet from what. Having stripped away her own involvement or interest, Evangeline sensed that Henry was in some sort of mental and moral danger. That being the case, she had been foolish to alert Hope. She should have exercised caution and not raised any alarm so soon. Being better acquainted than a servant with her husband, with the possible exception of Poole, she knew that to provide a mere hint of personal information which had not been expressly provided by Henry himself could result in the chains of Henry's defence quickly lowering the portcullis to debar entry to the machinations of his mind.

Evangeline raised her hand to her forehead to feign some sort of emotional malaise. She had observed on many an occasion that this gesture seemed to evoke sympathy on the part of the spectator, no matter what the sentiment towards the other party beforehand. She hoped she had not overestimated the other woman's adherence to social etiquette.

"Oh madam, you must not upset yourself. I regret my bold words." Hope's miserable expression surpassed Evangeline's expectations and she stood poised and ready to pounce

so that Hope's tongue would again loosen long enough for the most useful clues to be gleaned. For a moment the thought occurred to Evangeline that she was not so very different from Henry, for was she herself not deceiving one whose trust was innocent and solid? Was she not at this very moment enacting a performance of the most fraudulent nature? But was this trivial pretence not justified in the name of a greater cause? She gasped, a fortuitous touch for the purpose of deception, but nevertheless a genuine reaction to the argument she had just presented to herself. For was her rhetoric not the very same sentiment with which Henry must have seduced himself?

While she was not ignorant of the irony of her final denial of the similarities between the behaviour of each Jekyll, Evangeline was convinced enough of the crucial distinctions to continue with her well-intentioned charade. She looked around for a bench, with the idea that Hope would in all likelihood neither abandon Evangeline in her invalid state, nor sit for any extended period making only polite conversation. Once seated, the conviction of her plan having been given a final seal of approval, Evangeline began her manoeuvres in earnest. She laid a hand on Hope's arm, exerting enough pressure to match her imploring tone, but not so much that Hope would feel strong-armed and therefore choose her words with excessive care.

"Forgive me, Hope, I have not been myself at all since I left the house. Do not think ill of me, I could not bear it."

"Oh Mrs Jekyll," Hope had to restrain the impulse to return a gesture of affection. "I have only good thoughts of you."

"But you must wonder at either the state of my mind or my marriage, or both, that I do not know this Mr. Hyde you speak of."

Hope shook her head with vehemence. "Oh no, madam, I meant not to imply such things. Please forgive me if you think it so and I have caused you offence. Upon my life, I truly believed you knew of Mr Hyde."

"Yes, yes, I see that," Evangeline nodded with equal vehemence in the hope that all the vigorous nodding would encourage the momentum and prevent a stop in the flow of

Hope's chatter. "I wonder that I could not know of Mr Hyde, as close a companion as he evidently is to Dr Jekyll. Indeed, yes, of course I *should* have known him.

"Oh no, madam, I assumed too much. After all, Mr Hyde and the master are never together. I never thought of it until now." Hope looked away, apparently lost in contemplation.

Evangeline allowed a few moments to pass before she continued her undetected interrogation. "So you see, Hope, it seems while Henry and I remain irreconcilable, all is well with my mind after all." She patted Hope's hand and gave what was intended as a teasing smile of collusion. Hope's returning smile was one of such relief that Evangeline felt as though the carriage of her plot had ridden over a tiny pebble of guilt, the only source of discomfort on an otherwise smooth journey. Still, the destination dictated the bumpy route.

"Yes of course, madam." Hope's face was so suddenly filled with sunshine that Evangeline's pebble transformed into a crystal of kindness, a benevolent stone which had restored tranquillity to Hope's mind. "Of course you may not have known of Mr Hyde, he is never with the master and he is never in the house, except for the doctor's private quarters."

"Indeed," Evangeline nodded. Her heart had lurched at the discovery that Hyde had been in Henry's cabinet, but she could see that Hope's delight at being saved from the jaws of culpability would blind her to any clue that Evangeline's mind was far from soothed. Nevertheless, Evangeline made every effort to appear nonchalant over the whole affair. "Mr Hyde is perhaps a merchant of some sort, no doubt." She forced herself to look away with the air of someone engaged in merely casual conversation.

"No madam, he has a key," Hope said, unaware of the import of this revelation.

Evangeline's head whipped round but fortunately Hope was looking wistfully at some children. Her heart was beating at a frantic pace and a headache was in its infancy. "Ah, then he is surely a supplier of medical paraphernalia of some sort? If Dr Jekyll is away from home, this Hyde may need to deliver something urgently and it is more convenient for both parties if any packages are placed directly in the laboratory without waiting for Poole to receive the visitor."

“Oh,” was Hope’s simple response.

Evangeline could have throttled herself at her stupidity; what was she thinking, providing Hope with a plausible explanation and one that may now prevent further questioning? To press the matter further after such a neat solution to the conundrum may well alert Hope to the suspicions of her mistress.

It was Hope herself who provided the opportunity for Evangeline to continue her enquiries. “That cannot be the nature of Mr Hyde’s visits, madam,” she said in a faraway voice. She then turned to face Evangeline and said with an air of triumph, “no, indeed! For we were all given orders to obey him.” She gave a nod in the manner of a final flourish, evidently pleased with her skills of seduction.

“Obey him,” Evangeline breathed the phrase, the words tasting bitter as she spoke them. Her mind attempted to simultaneously grasp and eject both sound and meaning. For a few moments, she was incapable of further thought. She felt suspended in the horror of her own world, creating it as she had by her own inquisitive nature. The pyrrhic victory of being correct in her assumptions was tempered by feeling sickened that each discovered secret of Henry’s appeared increasingly darker. There was now no question that the relationship between Henry and Mr Hyde was both personal and significant. The fluid nature of her theory regarding a family link was now in the process of solidifying. But the thought that Henry had knowingly both allowed a mysterious visitor free access to their home, as well as hidden him from his wife, caused considerable discomfort for Evangeline.

Evangeline would steel herself for what she must do, but for now she allowed herself to feel fragile. She had felt she had lost Henry, but now she realised that Henry had lost himself. Perhaps he had become a stranger to himself even before he knew of Evangeline Gunn’s existence. With this thought came an urgent need to be alone and she presented her excuses to Hope with as much levity as she could muster, untangling the dog leads with trembling hands and promising Hope that she would be at the next Women’s Guild meeting.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Evangeline buried her chin further into the folds of her scarf. It was almost three o'clock on a new morning, the sky black and the air biting. She had watched Hyde leave Berkeley Square hours earlier, unwilling on this occasion to follow his movements, but determined to see if indeed he had permission to return as he pleased. She had taken shelter earlier, when the wind had urged the air to bite deeper, but remained in the same spot when she found it afforded a clear view without fear of being noticed. Although she had made sure to dress as an indistinct male, her inexperience at playing the sleuth made her feel nervous. She found she did not feel uncomfortable disguised as a male; what made her feel awkward was the possibility of revealing her suspicion.

As she wondered how much longer she could stand the cold, she heard a scream, followed by shouting which seemed to come from several directions. She hesitated, not wishing to become embroiled in something which may distract her from her task, yet fearing that somebody may be in danger. Fearing that skulking in a corner may cause her to be mistaken for the villain of whatever misdemeanour was in progress, she approached the source of the commotion. She fought the urge to turn heel and return home. In front of her, only a few feet away, was none other than Mr. Hyde. Beside him was a face more familiar to Evangeline, for it belonged to a gentleman she knew well. Richard Enfield, a well-known man about town, was an erstwhile suitor. Although too dull for Evangeline (mercifully, a trip overseas had intervened and she was only too happy to exploit this as a means to end their tedious encounters), Mr. Enfield was a perfect gentleman with the most impeccable manners. She was therefore surprised to see that he was clearly manhandling Mr. Hyde towards a crowd, from which came a whimpering sound.

In the midst of shouts of recrimination, calls for calm to be restored and words of comfort offered to the victim, no notice was taken of Evangeline. She moved closer to the huddled group, who assumed that this young man had come to lend an extra hand should the other fellow need further restraint. Evangeline stayed silent, merely nodding or shaking her hand at the appropriate times.

After a few minutes, she was familiar with the details of the incident. The whimpering had come from an unfortunate girl who had been trampled by Hyde. By all accounts, the two had collided and the blackguard had simply stepped on the child as if she were nothing more than a fallen leaf. Evangeline could not believe someone who would do such a thing could be any friend of Henry. On the other hand, if her theory was correct, and Hyde was not a friend, but a relative, familial duty and honour would bind Henry, no matter what the character of Hyde. She tried without success to obtain a thorough inspection of the man, for he was at first bundled back and forth. The men of the party circled round him to prevent his escape, while the group discussed what should be done.

It became apparent that most of the party around the child were members of her family. While Evangeline understood their anger, she was concerned that a nine-year-old girl had been on the street at such a late hour. In their clamouring for vengeance against Hyde, where was their shame at their own neglect? What had the child been running from? Her thoughts were halted with the arrival of a doctor, a fellow with a refined Scots accent. He pronounced the girl unhurt and therefore his task was brief. Yet he remained in place as an extra guard and it was decided that some money must be paid as recompense to the girl's family.

They went in a body to Hyde's house, Enfield muttering for the entire interlude that they were foolish to allow the fellow to enter his house unaccompanied as the fiend would be climbing out of a window as they stood as still and dumb as street lamps. But Mr. Hyde reappeared bearing gold and a cheque from Coutts. While Richard looked affronted that Hyde had proved him wrong, Evangeline decided that Mr. Hyde was an enigma. Here was a fellow who was, judging by his plain attire, not a man of either inherited or self-made fortune. His abode, too, was not the sort of residence which befitted a man of wealth and status. Yet he stood before his persecutors with the ransom price having been summoned with no hardship on his part.

If Enfield was shocked, he disguised it well; otherwise he had not noticed a detail of the utmost significance. When Hyde proffered the cheque to the child's father, Evangeline had stolen a glance at the signature, which belonged not to Hyde, but to Henry Jekyll. It was fortuitous for Evangeline that a decision was made for the whole party to go the next day to

the bank, for she knew she must return home immediately. As soon as it was ascertained that Hyde would be spending the night under the watchful eye of the other men, and under the roof of Enfield's chambers, Evangeline bade her goodbyes. She noticed that Hyde, who had taken no notice until now of this stranger, looked at her with an intense and quizzical expression. It may have seemed to the onlookers that fear had taken hold of the young man, which indeed it had. Yet the fear was not straightforward; something about Mr. Hyde was extremely familiar. He was looking at Evangeline as if he knew of her deception, but this was not the reason for her distress. She could not say that she did not mind his stares, yet these alone were not a cause for her upset; what disturbed her so was the manner in which Mr. Hyde had behaved towards her immediately prior to subjecting her to his direct gaze. He had begun to sniff the air in the manner of an animal, as if he had picked up the scent of his prey. She forced herself not to run and slowly her form dissipated like a clearing fog.

While Hyde lay in an uncomfortable, makeshift bed, Evangeline was at last resting in her bed at Connaught Square. Though exhausted, sleep was held at bay by her aching legs, the cold temperature lingering in her feet, and the contemplation of this web around Mr. Hyde; a web in which an unseen spider was spinning increasingly complex threads. Instead of deciphering the pattern, as she had hoped, there were now more questions, where there should have been answers. Instead of serving to elucidate the mystery, observing Mr. Hyde at close quarters had transformed a clear path of deduction into a forest of wild speculation. Had he recognised her, despite her careful disguise, as the lady of the house at Berkeley Square? What was the meaning of the fact that he had no paltry sum of money at his disposal? Did he mock her? Why could she not put out of her mind such details as his smell and the familiar memory of his voice?

At the sound of this question in her own mind, Evangeline sat up purposefully, rearranging her pillows in preparation for further thinking, as if the creases in her thoughts could be smoothed with a straighter spine. Here was a gateway into the garden of clarity. Firstly, the money surely meant one of two things: either Hyde was blackmailing poor Henry, or he was known as friend or kin to Henry. Secondly, what blackmailer would be given the key to his victim's house? Allowing for the fact that fear could likely induce one into many perilous situations, certainly the blackmailer who took his profession seriously would be audacious

to the point of stupidity to draw to himself unwanted and dangerous attention. Indeed, no! Evangeline thumped the bed with force.

The next day she left the house again in disguise, informing the housekeeper that she was in rehearsals for her amateur theatre company. Not wishing to be too close to anyone in the daylight, she stayed in the background to watch the proceedings. Although the men looked not a little relieved that Mr. Hyde had not added forgery to his crimes, Evangeline had felt sure that, in accordance with her theory, the cheque would be cashed with no hindrance. As each man went their separate way, Enfield studying Hyde with fear and suspicion, Evangeline tipped her hat forward and set off in the direction of The Lamb and Flag. Hyde was no blackmailer, he was something far worse, of that Evangeline was certain. He was close to Henry, very close, and she would prove it so.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

At 10pm Evangeline stood at the end of the by-street, which was silent and solitary except for the figure of Gabriel Utterson at the opposite end. She had walked past him twenty minutes before and made a conspicuous gesture of begging so that she would be quickly dismissed from his consciousness as one of the drops in an ocean of lowly men, desperate either to feed their children or quench their thirst. When she was sure she had gone far enough to be both forgotten and unseen, she stopped and waited.

Although the sight of Henry's friend had been a surprise, it was not entirely a shock. For on the occasion when Enfield had apprehended Hyde, she knew that Utterson, being his cousin, would have been informed of such an incident. Being a lawyer, it followed that Gabriel Utterson would want to undertake his own discreet investigation into a man whose character was dubious, yet who had been under the care or protection of Henry Jekyll, his friend and client. Yet it seemed odd that Gabriel was so far from Gaunt Street at this hour, skulking and hiding as she was. Evangeline felt that she had no choice but to use subterranean methods to elicit information. The fact that Henry's trusted friend was using identical tactics gave her great cause for concern. If Utterson had decided on the same plan of action as herself, this could only indicate two things: that direct questioning had gleaned no useful information, and that whatever information *had* been given by Henry had only deepened Utterson's suspicion. Why then, if a *lawyer* was suspicious there *must* be something quite dastardly going on at 52 Berkeley Square.

Evangeline had sunk so deeply into the swamp of her thoughts that Utterson had taken a few steps before she realised he had moved from his post. He was approaching Hyde, who had made straight for the door and drawn a key from his pocket like one approaching home.

"Mr. Hyde, I think?" Utterson touched Hyde's shoulder as he passed.

Though he must have been shocked, his answer came in a cool voice: "That is my name. What do you want?"

"I see you are going in. I am an old friend of Dr. Jekyll's – Mr. Utterson of Gaunt Street – you must have heard my name; and meeting you so conveniently, I thought you might admit me."

"You will not find Dr. Jekyll; he is from home." Hyde blew sharply on the key and asked, "how did you know me?"

"On your side," said Mr. Utterson, "will you do me a favour?"

"With pleasure. What shall it be?"

"Will you let me see your face?"

Hyde hesitated and then turned to the lawyer with a look of defiance. He and Utterson stared at each other for a few moments.

Utterson spoke first. "Now I shall know you again. It may be useful."

"Yes, it is as well we have met; and *a propos* you should have my address." Evangeline did not hear the details. Hyde added, "and now, how did you know me?"

"By description," was Utterson's reply.

"Whose description?"

"We have common friends."

"Common friends?" Hyde's voice was hoarse. "Who are they?"

"Jekyll, for instance," replied Utterson.

"He never told you," cried Hyde, his anger flaring, "I did not think you would have lied."

"Come, that is not fitting language," said Utterson.

Hyde gave a snarling, savage laugh and the next moment unlocked the door and disappeared into the house with the swiftness of a ghost.

Utterson stood awhile and Evangeline watched from the courtyard entry. The lawyer set off slowly down the street, pausing every step or two to place a hand to his furrowed brow, muttering various utterances about Dr. Fell, Harry Jekyll and Satan. She followed him round the corner, where he approached Evangeline's erstwhile marital home. He knocked the door and, when Poole answered, asked if the doctor was at home. Poole invited in the guest and Evangeline waited for a few minutes. Utterson emerged from the house and set off homeward.

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Evangeline moved her pillow higher and settled down to read, in the hope that something terrifying would cut her own terror down to size. But when she turned the page she realised that, were she to be threatened with the worst kind of torture if she would not recite the details of what she had just read, she would not be released without severe injury. She put the book down with a heavy sigh, resigning herself to her own mind which wished not to dwell on frightful fantasy but on the very real problem before her. Why could she not simply leave Henry and consign her own marriage to a memory of a kind of frightful fantasy? Should she not accept that they must officially separate and that Henry was not the man she had believed him to be?

Yet something deep inside her, something unfamiliar and disembodied, would not let go of her and would not let her go. She knew she could begin her life again, she knew that despite the humiliation and pain she felt, that she would one day remember what happiness felt like. It would not happen for a long time, she was not naïve enough to think that maybe next week she would awake and the hurt would not greet her as she woke, slamming against her chest like the worst bully. Yet she was quite sure that this stranger who had appeared within her recently in the form of a cautionary spectre was not merely a foolish and lovesick girl who could not bear the reality of a ruined fairytale. But there was something she must decipher in her mind before she made a decision whether or not to proceed with her plan or to abandon it in the belief that Henry's life could no longer be part of hers. Did she believe that Henry was at the mercy of his principles? Was there a chance that he had acted in such a manner in order to protect someone he loved? Or was he simply a man of questionable morals, masquerading as a gentleman of noble principles? She

turned these questions over in her mind until the words became court jesters, spinning and shrieking at her.

She slapped the bed covers with impatience and uttered an audible and decisive “no.” No, she was not fooling herself and clutching desperately at a loose theory so that she could lend legitimacy to reconciliation with Henry. No, it did not feel right to think of Henry as a Machiavellian manipulator. Certainly she could not readily forgive him, but she felt sure that if the facts were known and his motives were transparent, she could at least make an informed decision. She had known Henry and loved him; it was unthinkable that she had loved a mere persona, an impostor. If Henry had lied about his sister, Evangeline may have decided against seeking a glimmer of redemption, but the fact that he had been so reluctant for Evangeline to discover the truth surely suggested that there was a *reason* for this high degree of subterfuge.

She sat up suddenly, as if she were going to leap out of bed. She gasped and uttered a triumphant “yes! I have it!” Why was Henry so charitable? Because charity begins at home. The formula needed to be perfected before it was given to its intended recipient – his sister. It made sense that she lived so far from London, away from men such as Hastie Lanyon, who was so opposed to Henry’s exploratory research. She saw it now, why Henry had to conduct his “unscientific balderdash” in secret. To cure Lydia in London would be to risk a professional scandal and ruin Henry’s reputation and his standing within the British Scientific Council. With Lydia in Walmer, the formula could be sent and administered with discretion, under the watchful eye of Aunt Agnes.

But what of Hyde, where did he fit in this scheme? Well, no matter, she would have her answer soon enough, for she was now resolved wholeheartedly to continue with her quest for the truth. She allowed the thought that, once in possession of the truth, she may discover that Henry could not be exonerated after all. Well, this thought was an encouraging sign that she was maintaining a detective’s scepticism. What must be a priority at this juncture was the cool gathering of hard facts.

She sat back against the pillow, rather smug at her powers of analysis and the detachment with which she had appraised her own analysis. Yet, snapping at the heels of this self-congratulatory mood came a pack of hungry memories. They snarled at her: what nature of

detachment can reside in one who still harbours desire for her object of detachment? They clawed at her mind: how can scepticism be present in one who would still love a man who had taken the most indecent liberties? Was it not only this afternoon that she had sat, in Connaught Square, among the orchids and the belladonna lilies, flushing at both the heat and thoughts of her intimacies with Henry? Did she not think, then, of the moments she had shared with Henry: the private, the public, the lively and the gentle? Yet, the finer the detail of her recollections, the more she became convinced that something, although sinister, remained as yet unexplained, but would shed light on the darker aspects of Henry's conduct. Hyde had the key and *was* the key. It was up to her to unlock the secrets which lay behind the door of Henry's mind.

A quiet knock sounded on her door and Mrs. Gunn peered into the room.

"Ah, you are awake, darling. I thought you were having a bad dream."

"Indeed? I was merely thinking, mama."

Mrs. Gunn chuckled. "You think very loudly."

"Mama, you are funny. I *was* thinking aloud. I am sorry if I woke you."

"Oh no, darling, you did not. I was doing some serious thinking of my own." She sat on Evangeline's bed and took her daughter's hand. "Perhaps we should have a holiday, just you and I. Arturo can come and keep Papa company and we can go somewhere nice. Wherever you want to."

Evangeline smiled. "That would be nice. We can go soon, mama."

Mrs. Gunn clapped her hands and seemed relieved. "Think about where we shall go and we can depart next week."

"I did not mean quite so soon, mama. I must attend to some matters before I can think about a holiday."

Mrs. Gunn's features curdled. "This is exactly *why* you need a holiday, Eva." As she said, 'why,' she slapped the bed and Evangeline thought the gesture unnecessary and melodramatic, until she remembered that such traits had been inherited.

Evangeline felt it advisable to remain unimpassioned, lest this added fuel to the fires of her mother's persuasion tactics.

"Mama, I do not follow your logic."

"Oh, logic," Mrs. Gunn waved the word away as if it were a fly. "You are doing too much worrying, this is why you need to take some different air, see some different people."

Evangeline laughed, to her mother's chagrin. "You paint a picture of me having the most awful, isolated life imaginable. I see different people all the time, mama!"

"Eva, you know what I mean," was Mrs. Gunn's response, as if that was the sentence that would weigh the decision according to her will.

"Mama, I am afraid I do not. I would like to go on some sort of adventure with you, I truly would, but I simply will not enjoy it if my mind is back at home trying to sort things which cannot possibly be sorted unless I am here."

Mrs. Gunn eyed her daughter with suspicion. "And these...things...they cannot wait for a while. You cannot do the sorting when you get back, when your head is clear?"

"Oh mama, why do you assume my head is not already clear? With what do you imagine it is cluttered?"

"I don't *imagine*. I *know* it is stuffed with thoughts of your husband." She reached out and stroked Evangeline's cheek. "You need some distance."

"I have some distance, mama. I have been nowhere near Henry for a long time now."

"I am talking about distance from the situation, from London. Everywhere are the reminders."

Evangeline opened her mouth, then closed it when she realised that there was no effective rejoinder to a statement of fact. She took no pleasure in withholding her thoughts and intentions from her parents, but it would be a futile exercise to attempt to explain her plans and the motivation behind them. But she had told her mother the truth as far as she felt able to; a holiday now, when she felt on the brink of a breakthrough, would be unbearable. It would also serve no purpose, as her restlessness would only cause further anxiety for her

mother. No, she must execute the plan forthwith and put herself out of her misery. She had to be sure once and for all that she was to spend her life either with or without Henry, but she could not remain in this state of persistent doubt.

“Mama, please trust my judgement that I cannot go until the time is right. I say this with consideration for you, as well as myself.”

Mrs. Gunn sighed. She struggled briefly with her own doubts and with the urge to employ more forceful persuasion. Yet she knew, without fully knowing, that she must trust her daughter’s instincts. Of course, she respected her decision, but she knew that to put faith behind that respect was what Evangeline needed at this time.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

Evangeline had awoken earlier than usual, for the purpose of evasion. Her parents were early risers and she wished to spend the morning without expressions of sympathy and caution. She needed clarity and one's parents could not be relied upon not to muddy the waters of one's resolve. Of course, she would not escape, for much longer, the sage advice of her father, which, on most occasions, was heeded with inevitability. But this morning had been set aside to spend in Richmond Park in the company of a cunning female.

It was a crisp November morning, one of those days when one wonders what could possibly be so wrong in the world when the sun still warmed the faces of all who ventured out and the postures of the flowers remained so pleasingly upright. The camellias looked elegant, the fiery leaves of the Japanese maple seemed to glow for the enjoyment of those around, and one could imagine that the spindle tree's blazing scarlet leaves and pink and orange fruits were so designed to gladden the heart of humankind. The birds sang as though they wished to entertain without being too obtrusive, and every stranger that passed her greeted Evangeline with a beatific smile. Yet her heart was heavy and woe resided in her soul.

She found the perfect spot. The hilly terrain afforded a spectacular view (one could even see St. Paul's Cathedral), but Evangeline had not come here in the guise of a romantic poet, or even a lady of idle leisure. She set down her load and allowed herself only a few minutes of inward contemplation before she reached over to the basket. She put on a glove and lifted the cargo onto her hand. This creature was also a sage, but a silent one in the shape of a goshawk.

"Good girl, Morrigan," Evangeline said in a soft voice. She wondered if the bird was as soothed by the touch of her mistress as the mistress was by the bird's soft feathers and her steadfast, knowing gaze. As she raised her arm for the bird to fly, she felt the familiar sense of exhilaration, as if for a moment her soul had taken flight alongside Morrigan. It was a bittersweet feeling, for a brief sensation of despondency would immediately follow on the tail feathers of such a thrill. Always accompanying the momentary freedom was a sense of heaviness, a sudden consciousness of being weighed down by one's very self. She envied Morrigan her powers of flight, yet she felt a fierce passion that the bird's ability to exploit

her freedom should be lauded. Into Evangeline's mind came a vision of Lydia and she felt a shadow of pain. For she was certain now, with hindsight, that the woman's comportment was of one whose natural freedom had been curtailed.

As Evangeline kept her eyes on Morrigan and her thoughts on Lydia, a new branch of thought grew from the trunk of her theory. It made perfect sense. Mr. Hyde was not Mr. Hyde at all; he was Mr. Jekyll. *Yes, of course.* A surge of excitement arced through her as Morrigan swooped between two oaks. Why, there was not one Bertha Mason in this family, but two. Lydia may not have become a wild, savage lunatic, but she had been spirited away to be guarded by Aunt Agnes, which left the other Jekyll sibling to be cared for by Henry under his roof. This explained why the cheque had been signed by him, for was he not bound to demonstrate care for the less fortunate? No doubt poor Henry, blessed though he was, had been cursed in a different way. Though he had escaped the degenerate traits of blood inheritance, family ties dictated that his fate was nevertheless to suffer the same curse. Evangeline was now determined to revisit Walmer, for she felt close to solving the riddle and thereby determining the exact culpability of Henry. This in turn would dictate down which path of her future she must journey. A new, alternative branch was forming, for it was possible, however unpalatable for Evangeline, that Mr. Hyde was to Henry as Mr. Rochester's illegitimate offspring had been for Jane Eyre. One must hope that Lydia would provide the answer, for if she had only one brother, this would surely mean that Mr. Hyde was in fact her nephew.

Further on in the morning, in Berkeley Square, the master bedroom's occupant lay prone after a late end to his night's adventures. He had awoken with somewhat odd sensations, not the usual fragility of limbs and organs and the dull recall of previous events, but an unfamiliar sense of profound but subtle alterations. It was as if the world had tilted to a slightly different angle, or as if an incident had occurred whilst Henry had been asleep, yet he had a psychological awareness. He roused himself enough to look about him with a sleepy curiosity, for although he saw the usual features of his room, his mind insisted that he was in the little room in Soho where Edward Hyde was accustomed to sleep. Henry noted the tall proportions of his room, the intricate carvings of the mahogany bed and its brocade curtains. He dropped back into a comfortable morning doze which allowed him to engage in musings and hopes of Evangeline's return.

After a few minutes, he felt more awake and for a moment his eye fell upon his hand. The effect on Henry was as if a disembodied appendage had been placed on the bed clothes as some ghastly prank. He stared at it for near half a minute, as if drugged with denial. His hand had turned from large, firm, white and smooth to a lean outcrop of taut sinews, darkened flesh, and pronounced knuckles, with a dusting of black hair. A startled terror then lurched at his breast and, bounding from his bed, he rushed to the mirror. He saw that the effects of the formula seemed to be working in reverse. The character he sought to diminish and throw off was in danger of becoming irrevocably more his own than his original and better self. With another bound of terror Henry asked himself how this was to be remedied. The servants would be up and his drugs were in the cabinet at a distance which may as well have been as far as the Alps for all the ease with which they could be obtained.

But then Henry remembered with sweet relief that the servants, although wary of Mr. Hyde, were used to his coming and going. After dressing, he passed through the house, where Bradshaw stared and recoiled. Ten minutes later Henry Jekyll sat, physically recovered and acting the part of enjoying his breakfast, under the shade of his own brooding. Had his carefully protracted experiments come to nought? Must he start again, entirely abandon the transforming draught and begin anew his work? It was unthinkable that he was becoming slowly but surely incorporated with his second and worse self. Yet it was equally unthinkable that after all his efforts he should begin to fail. On one occasion, and with infinite risk of death, he had been forced to treble the amount of draught in order to stimulate the desired effect (he made a mental note to point out to Evangeline, should she return, that he had taken no such risk with *her*); such was his faith in the potential of the drug.

Yet this fact he could not deny: he must choose between the two of his natures. And while a favourable vote for Jekyll would mean the starvation of certain appetites, the thought of casting in his lot with Hyde brought down upon Henry a veil of despair. As a trembling sinner, he imagined the death of a thousand cherished dreams, the loneliness of one despised by his fellow men and the loss of honest hopes. Hyde would be unaware of his loss, but Jekyll would be doomed to a Faustian torture of his soul. He convinced himself in that moment that he had bidden a decisive farewell to all the pleasures he had enjoyed with Edward Hyde, for the safe harbour of the restricted life and approving conscience of Henry

Jekyll. Yet, is not the heart deceitful above all things? Perhaps, then, he would do well to move from Berkeley Square. After all, could he throw off entirely the nature of Edward Hyde if he conducted his daily activities in a house which had once belonged to the first victim of his *alter ego*? Though Dr. Denman (a man of unscientific balderdash, if ever there was one), could hardly be termed an innocent man, Henry could not be expected to erase all vestiges of Hyde, whilst at the same time residing with his spectral victim. Indeed, but where would he go where some spectre or other did not haunt him? Certainly for now, he did not want to think about such matters. To teeter on the edge of this particular precipice only served to make Henry run in entirely the opposite direction. There was nothing to be gained by casting one's line into the river of past memories; invariably, one would simply dredge up a stinking boot. In that rebellious manner in which the mind operates, the more Henry insisted that he would not visit the past, the more the past insisted on visiting him.

He turned his head away as if his thoughts were outside of himself and by such a gesture his thoughts could be denied. As a hostile spectator may do in response to an unsavoury theatre production, he turned his head this way and that to refuse acknowledgement of a series of memories: the exhibition at Crystal Palace; doctors; his parents; the way his sister had tried and failed to soothe him while upon her own face there came a thinly veiled mask of terror. This collage of deeply buried recollections was too vivid; his stomach would take no more, and the painful sensation of his own fingernails against his palm returned his mind to the present. Wine be damned, he needed whisky. He tasted the bile of contempt at the thought that the wrong sibling had been targeted for a cure, before disgust at the whole world propelled him from the room and eventually into the street.

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Evangeline maintained her surveillance of Berkeley Square and was beginning to think, having seen nothing of him, that Edward Hyde may have been banished by Henry. Yet she had seen so little of Henry also, that it seemed there was still a dark secret in the house. She had planned to make discreet enquiries to Hope, but the girl had not been seen at the Women's Guild meetings for some time. The other ladies had informed her that Hope and Bradshaw, Henry's footman, had wed, yet it seemed unlikely that Hope would abandon her charitable work, of which she was so passionately fond and through which came abundant

aid for her sister, because she had become a wife. Yet she had to concede that, footman or king, men were reluctant to allow their wives a modicum of independence.

Her suspicions were confirmed and her bloodhound nature rewarded, for one night the figure of Mr. Hyde emerged from the blistered door on the courtyard building. Had she not recognised him from his appearance, she would have known it was Hyde from the way the tramps, slouched into the recess, parted in fear. She followed him down Piccadilly, through Charing Cross, a little way up the Strand and up a side street where he stopped at The Harp tavern. He went in through the rear entrance and Evangeline hung back, loitering in the passage and hoping that her presence would not invite some troublesome behaviour from others lurking around the tavern. A couple of women kept glancing in her direction, in what Evangeline could only describe as a hopeful way, and she did her best to appear polite without being inviting. They made various innocently teasing remarks such as “oh look, Annie, ‘e’s a shy one,” but mostly paid no heed and continued with their gossip. Evangeline paid little notice to what they said, her anxiety giving precedence to her own racing thoughts, but a segment of their chatter caught her attention. The content was shocking to Evangeline, but the manner of the women’s discussion was brazen and casual:

“She reckons she got away with it, Annie.”

“No chance, they’ll catch ‘er, you watch.”

“I dunno, Annie, ‘ow will they? ‘E’s gone, an’ once ya gone - well...”

“I dunno...she’s tellin’ everyone, they’re bound to catch ‘er.”

“I’m tellin’ ya Annie, she’s tellin’ everyone cos she knows they found nuffin’!”

“She keeps tellin’ people, and they’ll dig ‘im up.”

The other woman clicked her tongue and rolled her eyes.

“Bleedin’ ‘ell, Annie, I *told* ya, it won’t make no difference. She put it up ‘is *arse*!”

Annie gasped. “You never – *what*?! She *never*!” She gasped again and put her hand to her mouth.

"Hmm," the other woman put her hand on her hip. "Bloody deserved it if you ask me. That bastard used to beat 'er black an' blue. Arsenic up 'is backside was nuffin' to wha' I'd do to 'im if 'e was my bloke, I tell ya."

Annie gasped again and gave a nervous laugh. "Poor Lionel."

The other woman gave her a gentle shove and cried, "Poor Lionel! Fuck me, Annie, 'ow would you like to be beaten every day of ya bleedin' life, ya soppo cow? Nah, 'e 'ad what was comin' to 'im. Any'ow," she began to smirk, "knowin' 'im 'e prob'ly enjoyed it, the grimy old bugger."

Annie gave a small laugh. "Connie, don't."

Connie raised one eyebrow and made a lewd gesture with her finger.

Annie laughed, harder this time, and they both began to become quite raucous until they couldn't control their mirth.

"Oh, Connie," Annie was laughing so much that she had to lean on her friend for support. "an' to think we used to call Vi our little mouse!" She was now bent double and quite howling with the thought of their friend's vengeful act. "Up 'is arse!"

Connie caught the eye of Evangeline, who hadn't realised until now that she was entirely absorbed in the exchange between the two women.

"You wouldn't beat ya lady, would ya?" Connie was smiling, but gave Evangeline a challenging look.

Evangeline answered and immediately averted her eyes, but the two women laughed at her.

"You blokes, ya love that, don' ya?" Connie was grinning. Annie laughed and gave her friend a playful slap.

Just as Evangeline was telling herself that, in trousers, she could outrun the women, Hyde lumbered through the doorway and across the courtyard, nodding acknowledgment towards the two women. Evangeline retreated slowly into a dark corner.

" 'ere, Eddie, you 'eard about Lionel Wallace?"

Hyde stopped, looked at Connie and grunted. "Wallace was a cretin," he growled before heading for the street.

Evangeline stayed in the corner for a moment, before setting off in pursuit of her quarry. She passed close to the women and heard Connie say "'e's a queer one."

They walked back down the Strand and past Charing Cross, turning left at Northumberland Avenue and onto Craven Street. Halfway down this street, Evangeline once again had to retreat into a darker part of the street when Hyde stopped to talk to an aged, handsome gentleman who seemed to be an acquaintance. At the first the two men seemed to be engaged in banal pleasantries but all of a sudden Hyde became inflamed with anger and began to stamp his feet, brandishing his cane like a lunatic. The sequence of events which followed passed in a blur of violence and terror, the like of which Evangeline had never witnessed. Evangeline had run towards the scene and tried to grapple the cane from Hyde, but he was much stronger and merely threw her off as a bear may throw off a rabbit. Evangeline, now quite incapacitated with an injury from the impact of her body against the ground, heard a scream from a window; she looked up and saw a young woman immobilised by the trauma of what she was witness to. Evangeline called for her to fetch help, but the girl fell away from the window in a faint. Hyde clubbed the elderly gentleman to the ground, trampling him and beating him with his cane, catching Evangeline across the face as she tried once again to intervene. The body jumped upon the roadway with the ferocity of each blow until the unfortunate man's life force was visibly extinguished. Finally Hyde stayed his hand, his breathing heavy and his body arched over the prone figure. He turned away and approached Evangeline, kicking her hard as he passed her. She cried out and sank to the ground with a groan, watching his wild, harsh faced illuminated by the full moon. He set off at a swift pace and turned into Craven Passage, just as the fog was rolling over the city.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

Although thousands of pounds had been offered in reward for information relating to the whereabouts of Edward Hyde, he had disappeared as though his existence had been a myth. Evangeline had maintained her vigil, for she believed that Henry may still harbour, out of pity, his kin whom he likely believed to be no more capable of a calculated murder than a wild animal.

Yet for two months since Carew's murder, there was no sign or trace of Mr. Hyde, as if he had been simply blotted out. This did not signal to Evangeline's mind, however, that Hyde had been permanently removed from Berkeley Square. Would this accursed man not be hanged, or committed to an asylum, were he to be handed over to the authorities? Just as Mr. Rochester could not bring himself to expel from the home his mad wife, Henry must have Hyde ensconced in his cabinet, safely imprisoned. This theory had come to Evangeline, with a fully-formed certainty, one morning after a chain of fruitless nights spent spying for as long as she could stand the piercing January cold. It made no sense to her that one with whom Henry had taken many risks to associate would disappear permanently from Henry's life. Of course, Henry could have sent him away, but where could he be sent which did not involve further risk and the likelihood of a damaging scandal emerging, which Henry had taken great care to prevent. The more Evangeline tried to consider possible alternatives, the more it seemed that the most plausible explanation for Hyde's complete disappearance was that he had never in fact left Berkeley Square. Well then, her work was not finished.

On the afternoon of the 12th January, she received a letter. She recognised instantly the writing on the envelope, and the sight of her name in her husband's elegant script caused her heart to lurch uncomfortably. She sat for a few minutes, deciding which of the voices she should listen to. One was full of disquiet and caution, urging her not to read the letter for fear it should manipulate her mind in whatever direction Henry chose. The other voice told her that if there was any possibility that a full and honest explanation awaited her attention, then she would be not just foolish but perhaps negligent in some way. A further minute or so allowed the latter voice to become so voluble that it obliterated the former

from consciousness. She reached for the letter knife and ripped through the envelope as a starving hunter cuts the flesh of her prey. This is how the letter ran:

My dearest Evangeline -

My life's truest love. I implore you not to toss this missive into the fire (should you not have done so before opening), but to consider that, to whatever extent I have caused you injury, you will not be suffering with the blackness of distress under which I labour.

Perhaps I flatter myself that you will not trifle with this appeal, yet I cannot think that one so kind and merciful as you, my darling, would neglect to grant me only one wish and earn my gratitude completely.

You might suppose that I am going to ask you for something dishonourable to grant, yet I ask you only this: firstly, I urge you to read this letter in its entirety, however much (and with good reason) you have judged me to be an unworthy husband. Secondly, I ask you to meet me tomorrow at the bench in the Regent's Park near the Lion Vase statue.

Although I am certain that you have guessed at the reasons for my profoundly duplicitous behaviour, I urge you to set aside all speculation and recall the times when we were truly happy and when the future lay before us as an open gateway to Paradise. I wish you to steadfastly hold on to those memories, for I believe they can be rekindled with permanence.

Evangeline, it was with a morbid sense of shame, and not the desire to dupe you, that I hid from you my whole nature. I regret with the utmost sincerity the misjudged deed with which I caused you intolerable offence, yet I beg that you see, behind the action, the exacting nature of my aspirations which dictated that particular direction of my scientific studies. I saw only the naked possibility of the miracle before me, and the opportunity to confirm a discovery so singular and profound overcame the suggestions of an impropriety of the highest degree.

I will not enter deeply into any well of confession, for I wish to explain myself to you in person. Suffice to say that my love for you remains and compels me to assure you that my life has been nine-tenths a life of effort, virtue and self-control. Eva, I can say with honesty that in the months since you left, I have laboured to relieve suffering, I have done much in the service of others and I daily enjoy this beneficent and innocent life. In short, my dearest, you married a good man and, should you come back to me, you will find a better one.

I will wait for you tomorrow with fervent hope in my heart.

Your loyal husband and sincere friend, Henry.

In that way one reads such letters, as if deciphering the writing on an ancient tablet, Evangeline read Henry's letter five times over the course of the afternoon, until the return of her parents suggested the precaution of storing the letter in a drawer.

At dinner that evening Fergus Gunn sensed that his daughter's pensive mood was indicative not of withdrawal, but of thinking and plotting. He drew her into a conversation of idle gossip before the subject of Henry Jekyll was broached. Fergus was a kind man, but he judged that some situations called for a stiff approach.

His declaration was blunt: "He is a monster."

Evangeline sighed and looked at her father with a wary expression. "A most felicitous observation, father. Henry is troubled."

"As are all monsters."

"You cannot know him as I have known him."

"I no longer wish to know him and I wish to God you did not know him."

"Papa, I must tell you that I can never pretend that I wish I did not know him. Oh, I am tired of this talk of knowing him and not knowing him. I am sad for myself, but I am sad for him too. No soul could hate Henry more than he hates himself. It is reprimand enough."

"Eva, please, just ponder before you act, that is all I ask. I know you are no senseless bird of a woman, but do not let your kindness blind you to what that man is."

"Father, I am filled with compassion, not stupidity."

"Do you not think he has relinquished any expectations of compassion?"

"Papa, I must retire to bed, I am exhausted. But consider this when you talk of blindness: I believe that nobody but I sees some of the truth in Henry, except perhaps his sister. Not even Gabriel Utterson knows the true torment of his beloved friend." As she turned to leave, she added, "it is not kindness which blinds you to another's nature, Papa, it is ignorance."

Fergus hung his head briefly before regarding his daughter with a despondent look.

“Very well, Eva, but consider this when you talk of kindness: love can make you both blind and ignorant. Enquire of yourself if your kindness is ignorance disguised.”

Evangeline took the letter from the drawer for a fifth reading. Her heart continued to duel with itself, but by the time her head lay on her pillow that night, a sixth reading having been undertaken, she had decided, as a benevolent genie, to grant Henry’s wish. Neither you nor I can speculate as to the true motive behind Evangeline’s compliance, for she herself could not say with any certainty. Curiosity, she was aware, was no insignificant factor in her decision. Was there also love for Henry? Indeed so, for she was not a woman to embark on such an escapade unless there lay underneath a foundation of firm purpose. She further reasoned that, as she had intended to take a second trip to Walmer on the 16th January, in the company of Arturo, she would in all probability know considerably more of the background of Lydia. For the best and the worst she felt prepared, and by the time her eyelids drew a curtain down upon the stage of another day, Evangeline had become almost contented at the progress of her plans.

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The next day was fine and clear and the air carried a hint of spring. The sun had created puddles from melted frost, but in the shaded places the hoarfrost remained, insisting that the trees held on to their white costumes. Evangeline felt a strange comfort as she imagined many ancient spirits granting her safe passage through the park. Of course, she had no reason to be fearful, but she felt more guarded than she had expected. Perhaps the prolonged secrecy, with clandestine night watches and plotting, was taking its toll. With the sense that all that was soon to end, she felt lighter and a feeling of renewed vigour came over her. She held her head higher and quickened her pace, eager to see Henry and to hear his explanation.

After a minute or so, she saw the statue and her eyes sought the bench which sat impassive, unaware of its important role this morning. Nerves, undoubtedly, pushed Henry from her mind momentarily, as she mused on the range of possible dilemmas resolved on park benches in London. She caught sight of Henry and instantly all other thoughts were broken

and scattered, as if a silent explosion had occurred in her head. She stopped for a few moments to compose herself.

He sat, quite relaxed, in a pose which seemed to Evangeline smug and self-assured. It occurred to her that she may not in fact like this Henry. Perhaps he felt that, in living the life of a philanthropist for a few months, he had absolved himself of any wrongdoing towards his wife and therefore the wife would capitulate, fall into his arms and return to Berkeley Square to live happily ever after. Perhaps he also felt that, in the absence of any evidence to the contrary, his wife was unaware of the existence of Mr. Hyde. Evangeline felt rather irritated that she had not considered sooner this aspect of the puzzle. After all, Hope was not likely to have told her master of her unguarded blabbering. *Confound it*, she thought. Well, this would be the test for Henry: if he slipped as a serpent around the issue of Hyde, she would know that he continued in his dishonesty and deceit. Yet she was no Jane Eyre, and there would be no distant calling answered, for she must save her *own* soul. If Henry's self-assured posture foretold a presumption that Evangeline's return was guaranteed, the good doctor was due an unpleasant surprise.

She took a few steps forward, but only to reach the vast tree nearby, which she used as a disguised vantage point. She told herself she would stay in this spot for a few minutes longer. If Henry *was* sitting atop a mountain of self-satisfaction, then the least he deserved was to be kept waiting. Her tardiness should serve to inject a healthy dose of doubt in his heart and dilute the rich faith he had in his own power. What Henry did next, however, fanned with more urgency the flames of indignation curling around Evangeline's heart. As he turned his head, Evangeline saw a smile of such sickening pomposity that she fought the urge to run to him, knock off his hat and slap his face. She moved away from the tree, smoothed down her skirts and prepared to meet Henry in the style of a dispassionate lawyer, with finely tuned counter-arguments to his smoothly prepared manifesto. She took a few determined strides until an expected development ceased both her thoughts and movements. For no sooner had the smile appeared on Henry's face like an insidious vine, than his whole being was racked with the most violent shuddering. Evangeline stood watching as if her feet were set in clay, unable to obey her desire to run to his assistance. While his body shook, Henry appeared to lower himself and placed his hand to his mouth. Yet, at the precise moment in which Evangeline girded herself for action, a fresh terror

claimed her heart. For, against all reason and beyond the realms of possibility, the man who moments ago had been Dr. Jekyll of Berkeley Square, the respectable gentleman to whom she had given her hand in marriage, was now a known murderer and hunted fugitive. Evangeline stood and waited as a child hopes for its beloved parent to come back to life, hoping that what was in front of her was a product of her own overworked imagination. Yet, from his much changed appearance, ill-fitting clothes, and simian movements, Evangeline could plainly see that in place of her husband was Mr. Hyde.

Although a cautionary voice urged her to run to safety, she felt she must keep Hyde in sight until she could make some sense of what she had witnessed. She watched him summon a passing hansom, so she summoned the next one and gave the driver instructions to follow. They stopped at a hotel on Portland Street and made sure the driver waited for a few minutes before he opened the cab door for his passenger to dismount. She then sent the driver inside the inn to conduct discreet enquiries as to the nature of their murderous visitor. When the driver returned to the cab, he informed Evangeline that the 'gentleman' had requested a private room until nightfall. She henceforth requested to be taken home where she discharged the driver and occupied herself until the first sign of impending darkness. With careful haste, she donned her masculine disguise and with no more than a swiftly blown kiss to her parents, returned to Portland Street.

After an hour or so, Hyde emerged from the inn and summoned a cab. Evangeline followed again and both vehicles drove to and fro about the streets of the city. Eventually Hyde discharged his cab and ventured on foot, into the midst of pedestrians. Evangeline was grateful that he was preoccupied with chattering to himself, for she found herself following him through the less frequented thoroughfares. On Margaret Street a woman offered him a box of lights and for her trouble she was struck in the face. Evangeline had little time to stop and attend to her but she pressed some money into the woman's hand and told her to go home. The woman thanked her and said in a wounded tone: "He said I was sellin' meself cheaply. I just offered 'im some lights." Evangeline pressed the woman's hand for comfort and said quickly "take a cab home. Justice will prevail." She was grateful that she did not have to walk much further after this incident, for both anxiety and the pace of Hyde's steps were taking their toll.

Just as twelve o'clock was ringing out over London, Hyde came to an abrupt halt at a house on Cavendish Square and Evangeline recognised this as the house of Hastie Lanyon. What business could Hyde have with Lanyon? She was surprised to see Lanyon himself answer to Hyde's gentle knocking. Mostly she was grateful that he seemed neither surprised nor fearful at the sight of his visitor, who was crouching against the pillars of the portico. He merely asked, "Are you come from Dr. Jekyll?" When Hyde confirmed so, Lanyon bade him enter and Evangeline had to swiftly retreat round a corner as Hyde glanced backwards into the dark square. For a moment, she feared that Hyde had sensed her presence, for he appeared to give a start and advance into Lanyon's house with greater haste. How relieved she was, then, to see a policeman nearby, even if it did present a fresh risk. She bade a good evening to him, muttering something about waiting for his girl. The policeman passed by without suspicion and Evangeline took up as least a conspicuous position as possible outside Lanyon's house.

For a few minutes all that could be heard was the low hum of voices and Evangeline began to wonder, against all reason, if Lanyon and Hyde had become friends. Yet perhaps it was a different matter entirely; had not Henry on several occasions referred to Lanyon as a hide-bound pedant? Well then, this may be some sort of collaborative endeavour. If that was the case, why Lanyon was equally guilty of the murder of Carew! Perhaps (and this thought, she realised, was a last, desperate attempt to extricate Henry from an unnatural sort of wickedness), the whole sickening business had been at Lanyon's instigation. Still, she thought, and her heart seemed to plummet as one who finally loses their grip on the cliff edge, it was not Lanyon she saw transformed on the park bench and it was not Lanyon who had murdered Carew. Just as hope was resurrected with a distant possibility that Lanyon may still be held *morally* responsible, Evangeline heard a loud sob. Yet who had uttered the startling sound she could not say, and the voices and everyday noises resumed. She began to feel nauseous with impatience and nervousness, and a sudden wave of anger washed over her as she cursed Henry for being the reason she was out in the dark; cold, puzzled and fearful. Some may say that she was the author of her own decision, yet she truly believed that she would never find peace unless she satisfied herself that her most important decision had been made with the best of her judgment. That meant she had no choice but to establish the facts of the matter.

Lanyon's consulting room was brightly lit but the curtains, although closed, had evidently been drawn in haste, for there remained a long slit through which a sliver of the room could be seen. Although a full view was not afforded, Evangeline saw in the centre of the room a kaleidoscope of changing colours – first a reddish hue, then a brighter, more intense orange shade. She fancied she also saw small fumes of vapour emanating from the source of the rainbow. Suddenly the movement stilled and the colour changed twice more, first to a dark purple and finally to an insipid green. There followed more words lost in the confines of Lanyon's walls until the coloured object disappeared. Almost immediately afterward, there came a cry, and quick footsteps which appeared not to travel any distance. Then came a silence of a few minutes in which Evangeline tried, without success, to gain a better view of the room, for fear that Lanyon was unable to speak with Hyde's savage hands round his throat. Her attempt to gain a better footing in the large shrub outside the window was interrupted by a tortured scream. She was certain that the voice belonged to Lanyon and, amidst his continuing cries of 'O God!', Evangeline, with a strength beyond her natural ability, clung like an ape to the masonry. Her grip endured for a few moments only, for in the centre of Lanyon's room – shaking and groping as a blind man, was Henry. Evangeline had fallen with fright into the shrub but she needed to be sure that what she had seen was real and not the delusion of an exhausted, confused mind. She summoned enough strength to peer once more into the room and there was the irrefutable proof that her heart accepted with dread: she knew well enough the man she was staring at not to attempt to deny the evidence. The man she followed to Lanyon's was Mr. Hyde; yet the man who would depart in the same body was Dr. Jekyll. Evangeline stared as if wishes alone could undo the horror before her. She had hoped beyond reason that the transformation she had seen earlier would be explained by some apparition or some such caused by her own troubled mind.

She may have stayed at the window for longer, frozen in resistance, had the movement of Henry towards the window not terrified her into action. With a graceless thrashing of limbs, she fled in the direction of home, stopping on a street to vomit, then to sob. Her final action before the mercy of sleep and the comfort of pets was to throw her clothes into the fireplace, as if all memories of the night would burn with them. They were found the next

morning, by the housekeeper, piled on the hearth and when she asked Mrs. Gunn for definite instructions as to their demise, the reply was:

“Burn them.”

CHAPTER TWENTY

The journey to Walmer passed quickly, most of it spent with Evangeline laughing at Arturo's outrageous anecdotes. When they arrived in the village, Evangeline's mood became more sombre as she contemplated a difficult conversation. She reached for Arturo's hand and he in turn clasped hers.

"Eva, you don't have to do this," he said in a gentle tone.

"Oh, Arturo," Evangeline groaned, resting her head on his shoulder, "I do. There are things I must know."

"We can return home for dinner, we have seen much of the English countryside," he grinned. His attempt to cajole Evangeline into a lighter mood earned him a reproving look from his sister and they spent the remaining time engaged in muted pleasantries.

The house seemed different on this occasion. Perhaps it was the light, or perhaps the anticipation of a cool reception. Yet Evangeline felt that the house looked different today because she knew its commonplace exterior belied the secrets within. Its name, Pear Tree House, was accurate enough given the small orchard behind it; yet she wondered that she had not hitherto observed the statuesque, angular proportions and the lattice windows which lent to the house a closed, forbidding air.

Arturo helped Evangeline from the carriage as a violent gust of wind threw leaves into their faces. Arturo laughed but his sister, now feeling that the strangest of phenomena must be believed, suspected this act of nature to be the first link in a chain of portentous rebukes. She straightened her hat and smoothed her skirts, neither of which was necessary. Arturo held his sister firmly by her shoulders.

"Evangeline, there is no need to be anxious. Nobody is standing trial." His smile was gentle and Evangeline took a deep breath, closed her eyes for a moment, and returned his smile. She linked her arm through his and they walked towards the house. She slowed and unconsciously tightened her grip on Arturo's arm, for Lydia was on the doorstep, her expression unreadable. She glanced at her brother, anticipating an expression of support

and solidarity. The glance became a stare when she saw that Arturo's sights were fixed ahead. With a frisson of irritation, she pulled him into a faster pace and said,

"Art, this is not the occasion for your amusing repartee, put the idea from your mind immediately."

Arturo made an absentminded sound of accord which further irritated his sister.

"Art," she snapped, while tugging his arm.

"Indeed," he nodded distractedly, before adding, "not for a moment did I imagine her so beautiful." Arturo's remark was fortunate due to its unintentional effect of Evangeline, for her anxieties were momentarily diverted by the puzzle presented by his declaration.

As initial pleasantries were exchanged, Evangeline was surprised to notice the ease with which Lydia moved and spoke. Perhaps it could be explained by the fact that she had met one of her visitors before, but Evangeline had noticed that it was the more unfamiliar of the two visitors towards which all ease and warmth were directed. With the appearance of Agnes, Evangeline had expected a change in Lydia's demeanour, a more detached and restrained way of behaving towards the guests, for the initial absence of Agnes seemed the most likely explanation for the contrast between today's visit and the first. However, if any change was detected by Evangeline, it was that Lydia appeared subtly dismissive towards her aunt.

Evangeline sat back in the chair, a retreat for a brief interlude from the oppressive weight of her own relentless analysis. Regret and weariness came over her, as a cloud which obliterates the sun. They must have shown themselves on her face, for Lydia asked:

"Are you feeling unwell?"

Arturo regarded his sister with compassion. "She would not say so herself, but she was very apprehensive about this visit."

"Oh my dear, there was no need," said Agnes in a kind voice. She rose from her chair to feel Evangeline's forehead, which was pronounced to be warmer than expected.

Evangeline, disliking her weaknesses being the focus of discussion, composed herself. She offered vague explanations of tiredness, strenuous rehearsals and other excuses, and eventually the time was passed in taking tea and listening to Arturo's amusing tales of his most eccentric acquaintances.

An hour passed and Evangeline began to feel restless with inaction. Although she was grateful for Arturo's support, and for the unexpected consequence of his presence being a more pliant Lydia, the crutch she had relied upon was now threatening to collapse. Aunt Agnes mistook Evangeline's feelings once again for illness; either that, or else her reaction was the solitary weapon in her arsenal of responses. She rose from her chair again and repeated her earlier gesture. Lydia raised an eyebrow and gave Evangeline a knowing smile. Arturo merely looked bemused, first at Agnes' comical behaviour, then at Evangeline's irritated expression. It was not like his sister to be so indirect. He rebuked himself for forgetting that she was, in his opinion, mourning the loss of her husband; for though not deceased, she suffered as one suffers bereavement. However much he despised Henry Jekyll, Evangeline had loved him and was therefore entitled to some sensitivity and irrationality of mood. He well knew himself the seemingly strange ways in which one could behave as a result of having fallen in love with the wrong person. He was about to steer the conversation in the direction in which he knew Evangeline wished to proceed, but immediately after clearing his throat, Lydia spoke.

"Forgive my boldness, Evangeline, but it seems that from the moment you stepped from the carriage, you have been wishing to unburden yourself. I sense that what prevents you from unveiling the purpose of your visit is a conflict within yourself. Am I correct?"

Arturo smiled broadly and said, "your boldness matches that of my sister in her more usual mood." He expected his sister to smile in response, but her expression was pensive.

"You are correct, Lydia." She paused to consider her next words, but Lydia leapt into the void.

"I knew it," she said with triumph, clapping her hands together and smiling towards Aunt Agnes, "is it not the most splendid news?"

Agnes wore a look of frozen incredulity, her smile more an alarmed bearing of teeth than any expression of joy.

"I – er – I think...somehow I have misled you." Evangeline had no idea how anything she had said or done today could have conveyed the merest hint of splendid news.

"On the contrary, I think it is I who have misled you. You see I know how hostile I seem at time – aloof then," she waved her hand towards the dissenting utterances from Arturo, determined to make her point, "and I'm sure, as Henry's wife, you know some of the history of our family," (here she gave a conspiratorial glance towards Agnes), "yet I can assure you, no one could be as pleased as I, at the news of a child."

"Miss Jekyll –" Arturo began.

"Please, we are family, you must call me Lydia."

"Quite so. Lydia, then, are we to believe that you assume Evangeline to be expecting Henry's child?"

Lydia blinked hard and Arturo saw, for the first time, the veil of reticence and wariness to which others had become accustomed.

"I am mistaken?"

Arturo was about to respond but Evangeline sensed that he would handle Lydia in too clumsy a manner. His loathing of Henry made him potentially too insensitive to anything but shoot verbal missiles and risk expulsion of both guests from the house, with no further hope of solving the mystery surround Henry.

"Arturo," she said in a warning voice. She looked at Lydia, hoping for anything but pity. "Lydia, forgive me. Had I realised how little you knew of the situation between Henry and I, I would have...I *could* have..." she gave a nervous laugh, "well, it seems I am uncertain of what exactly I would have done, but it was not my intention to mislead you."

"What *did* you come here for?" Lydia's voice had a strident edge.

Arturo's reply was equally strident. "I must apologise for refuting your insight, for indeed you *are* hostile. I don't object to this *per se*, but I must object to your aiming it towards my sister, for she is undeserved of any animosity from you or your family."

"Arturo, please," Evangeline's interjection was loud and swift.

"No, Eva, I must protest." Arturo stood and began to pace around the room as he spoke, unable to stem the flow of speech and movement. At some point Agnes muttered something about more tea, and fled from the room, and Arturo continued, "I will *not* see you treated with contempt by another member of the Jekyll family. You have suffered enough." He looked directly at Lydia, who appeared to be not offended, but mesmerised by this animated man.

There was a flurry of activity and Arturo and Lydia turned to see Evangeline standing. She swayed slightly and it appeared as if she were about to faint. Lydia rushed to her and sat her back in the chair.

"You are *not* well, I fear."

A more subdued Arturo knelt beside his sister. "What's wrong, Eva?"

Evangeline shook her head, uncertain whether or not the gesture was intended to dismiss the question or her own thoughts.

"I have had a great shock recently. I will recover, naturally, but at present I know not what to think. Please, do not ask me any more questions and do not fuss over me, I cannot bear it. I -" she closed her eyes with a heavy sigh and let her head sink into her hand. She massaged her head for a few moments, and then looked into Lydia's eyes.

"I fear it was a great mistake to come here. It was my intention to ask questions, to find answers, but in my determination to do so I forgot that you too have a right not only to ask your own questions, but to expect courtesy and a right to your privacy. I am -" she looked around the room as if seeing it for the first time, and sighed once more, tears flowing abundantly.

Arturo took his sister's hand and enveloped it in both of his, his throat constricted so that words could not escape.

Lydia's face was full of emotion. "You are equally entitled to the same consideration, but I would very much like to know why you came today, and I would like to know what your brother means by saying that you have suffered enough at the hands of my family."

"I will answer for myself," Arturo said, prepared to obstruct the path to his sister for as long as possible and to whatever degree necessary. "Forgive my heated outburst; I was perhaps hasty, in my damnation of your brother, to lay the blame on the doorstep of your entire family. It was unfair of me, and I offer you my apology."

Lydia regarded him in a neutral manner. Once again Evangeline's mind was somewhat soothed by distractions, for there was no mistaking a palpable kernel of energy between her brother and their enigmatic hostess. With Arturo's expectant stare upon her, Lydia lowered herself into a chair. A smile lurked around her mouth but she kept it at bay.

"I too will answer for myself, for you assume wrongly that I am offended on my family's behalf. I cannot begin to explain the irony of that assumption." She gave what may have been a bitter laugh, but it was difficult to pinpoint the emotion behind it, as no sooner had the laugh escaped than, like a wayward genie, it was captured and squashed inside its home.

"I seemed to cause offence by leaping to the conclusion that Evangeline was with child. I meant no harm by this conclusion, I imagined it so by the combination of her evidently fragile condition and by the visit today, not least because you have accompanied her. Please, stay a while yet, do not depart with acrimony and misunderstanding."

Evangeline smiled, too weary to express either acceptance or objection. Arturo made a gracious gesture of submission and said, "I wish to cause no further offence with a refusal."

Gwen, who constituted the entire household staff, was instructed to provide more tea. Aunt Agnes had apparently been struck with a headache of such interminable magnitude that she had retired to her bed. Lydia felt that this particular cloud's silver lining meant that the old lady's sensibilities would not be injured while safe in her chamber of oblivion.

“I hope I do not injure your feelings, either of you, but it is my nature, when asking questions, to be direct. Please tell me why you came here today and in return I will answer your questions as best I can.”

Arturo realised that, as much as he wanted to shield Evangeline, he did not know himself the precise nature of their visit, only that he was to accompany his sister should events take an unpleasant turn; that is, if Lydia were to become disturbed or volatile and Evangeline found herself in a perilous situation, Arturo would be able to use his masculine strength to prevent any harm to his sister. Yet this would not suffice as an answer to Lydia for two reasons: firstly, it would naturally cause great offence; secondly, having met the woman, the premise was frankly ridiculous. Where had this notion of her condition come from? Of course, the claim regarding Lydia’s state of mind had been accepted in good faith from Henry, the sibling whose state of mind nobody had hitherto questioned, yet who clearly presented the greater danger.

Evangeline felt she owed Lydia as honest a confession as possible, yet she could tell no one what she had seen in the park. She therefore gave the briefest of outlines regarding her separation from Henry and his apparently delicate state of mind. What she wanted from Lydia, she said, was any advice on which Evangeline could act to save her marriage if at all possible.

The lurking smile was back, which puzzled Evangeline. Lydia showed no sign of being concerned about Henry’s collapsing faculties, yet this must have come as a surprise to her.

“How interesting,” said Lydia, so slowly that she made the two words sound like a long sentence.

“You’re neither concerned nor surprised by what I have told you. Does this mean Henry has suffered with this affliction for a long time?”

Lydia gave a sad smile, as if Evangeline were the one to be pitied. “My concern would be of neither use nor interest to Henry. As to my surprise – well, you hardly know me, but if you did you would know that my capacity for surprise was exhausted many years ago. But your question –” here she gave a sigh, more the weight of consideration than with sadness, “I am

unable to answer this, for Henry has been a stranger to me for longer than I care to remember.”

“There has been no contact of any sort?” Arturo asked. “Have you not exchanged letters?”

Lydia’s face twitched in several places. “We have not. He sends money, he cares for both our aunt and I, yet we see and hear nothing of him.”

“You cannot help then,” Evangeline said flatly.

Lydia made no reply but looked several times from Evangeline to Arturo. For a minute or so they sat as a triad of despondent silence, until Arturo ceased searching for some illumination in his lap and studied Lydia carefully.

“Your parents have passed away?”

“Yes.”

“Henry is your only sibling?”

“He is.”

“Why is there no contact between you?”

Evangeline found it impossible to look at Lydia, so her eyes fixed on Arturo, whose gaze was locked onto Lydia’s face.

“It is Henry’s wish, and has been so for many years.”

“For what reason?”

“I am a source of shame.” She lifted her chin slightly as she said this, and Arturo fought an urge to embrace Lydia until she softened.

Evangeline remained silent, not wishing to break the taut string of trust between the other two.

“What did you do?” Arturo asked.

Lydia gave a broad smile and rose from her chair to stand by the window. She had her back to her guests as she spoke.

“It was not the doing, but the *not* doing.” She turned to face them. “I did not obey. I did not conform. I did not blindly follow. I did not accept without question.” She smiled again. “I could continue with the many things I did *not* do.”

The words burst unbidden from Evangeline: “In describing yourself, you describe the very nature of me! If you knocked on the door of my parents and informed them that you sought a woman who did not obey, did not conform, did not blindly follow – why, they would ask you why it was their daughter you sought! Yet Henry pursued the woman you describe, he chose that woman above all else to spend his life with. It makes no sense that Henry will have nothing to do with you because of your attitude.”

Lydia returned to the chair and sat. “People rarely make sense, Evangeline. I am his sister, you are his wife. However, I do not mean to suggest that *Henry* made this decision, but that he is merely acting in a role designated by my parents. You see, I am not the one to be pitied, for it is my brother who bore the weight of expectations. If a child is disregarded, who else but the remaining child must bear the torch of duty?” She smoothed the arm of her chair in a repetitive motion, before continuing. “Henry likely knows not how to even acknowledge my existence, any more than I would know how to raise an elephant, should one appear on my doorstep.”

“You are close in age,” Evangeline countered. “Were you not companions in childhood?”

Lydia’s eyes darted to Evangeline and filled with tears. She sat rigid for a few moments, until, trembling, she dabbed at her eyes with a handkerchief. Evangeline approached Lydia and knelt beside her.

“Forgive me, I truly do not wish to see you upset.”

Arturo stood and offered to fetch Aunt Agnes, but Lydia laughed at this suggestion.

“I think the elephant would know better how to deal with an upset niece.”

They all laughed in a heartier manner than was justified. When the laughter abated, Lydia said, "I am being quite unfair. Aunt Agnes has shown me nothing but patience and kindness. Yet she is frightened as a young lamb of any passionate display of emotion." She studied brother and sister for a few moments. "The pair of you, on the other hand, seems to regard emotions and passionate feelings to be as natural as the sun and sky."

Arturo shrugged and Evangeline replied, "as indeed they are."

Lydia smiled. "I think you will understand, then, when I suggest that Henry does not contact me because my shame has become *his* shame. We suffered from the same actions, but in different ways. When I was a very young woman, it was decided that I must be...corrected, I think was the word used. I was put under the care of a doctor, then sent to an asylum and finally exiled here, assigned to the care of Agnes, where I have remained ever since. Unlike the fairy tale, their beauty that became a beast never repented and therefore remained a beast." She gazed toward the horizon and picked at invisible threads on her dress. "There you have it – the tragical history of Lydia Jekyll." Her scornful laugh was met with silence.

Evangeline was too upset to speak and Arturo said, in a thick voice, "you are no beast."

Lydia smiled at him, patted Evangeline's hand and said, "I am a contented beast. That is far better than a miserable princess."

After a few moments, Evangeline said, "I am puzzled. Forgive the interrogation, but why were you sent to an asylum *after* being under the care of a doctor?"

Lydia smiled at Evangeline in the manner of an indulgent parent. "Consider Henry. He is, by all accounts, a very accomplished doctor. Yet you say his mind is fragile. Sometimes doctors do not do what *should* be done; they are not interested in curing in the kindest sense. What they do is select ideal candidates for their experiments in order that they attain glory and recognition for their great scientific discoveries."

Evangeline blanched at this statement, for it was a sharp reminder of the terrifying sight she had witnessed only a few days ago, yet it also made her realise the great harm which Henry had done to himself. She had not considered this with sufficient clarity, for to do so would have meant admitting the possible futility of any reconciliation. For Henry to have made

himself the object of such a dangerous experiment, he must have been desperate and afraid and full of hatred for his own person. For the first time, Evangeline felt that hope was lost. She had no retort, either for herself or for Lydia.

Arturo's eyes were narrowed, his gaze intent.

"Then you *deteriorated* after the care of this doctor?"

Lydia did not reply, instead she looked at Evangeline and asked, "Has Henry never spoken of *any* of this to you? After all, you were living in this doctor's house."

Evangeline's posture straightened as her jaw slackened. "Dr. Denman?"

"Indeed. The esteemed surgeon," was Lydia's laconic reply.

Arturo looked from Lydia to Evangeline and back again, not wishing to imagine the worst details at which his thoughts guessed.

"I confess to being rather puzzled by what you are telling us, Lydia," Evangeline said.

Lydia regarded the other woman with a gentle expression. "I am encouraged by your confusion, for had you understood me immediately I would have pitied you."

Arturo cleared his throat and asked, "why did your parents assign you to the care of a surgeon?"

Lydia studied Arturo for a few moments and decided that his direct gaze invited an equally direct response however much a candid reply may horrify his sister.

"They reasoned that a wild, headstrong girl would be subdued into conformity by methods of physiological correction. Surgery of the most intimate kind was seen as an attractive prospect, with the promise that, where reasoning and threats had not cowed their daughter, anatomical intervention would guarantee the meek and subservient girl which Providence had neglected to provide. These more stringent methods were thought to work wonders for hysterical females who threatened to bring disrepute to the family name." A robin caught her eye and she remarked on its beauty. She tilted her head and said, "one cannot imagine a creature such as that being 'corrected' by its parents. It is accepted for what it is."

Evangeline had been silently shedding tears since the start of Lydia's explanation, but at this point she stood abruptly, muttering "you must excuse me," and left the room with as swift a pace as if a flaming missile had landed in their midst.

Lydia looked at a vase of violets and said in a wistful voice, "occasionally, I fear for the future of mankind, intent as it is on justifying the means of savagery in the name of civilising." She looked at Arturo. "There is an irony, do you not think, perverse to the extent to which one feels a certain satisfied pain in one's bones, that the most eminent characters are often those who cause those who were once civilised to become forever savage."

Arturo sat with his head hung low for a long moment, feeling sadness so profound that it seemed his soul had aged over eons. He looked up at Lydia and said, "then there are those of you who have been treated with such savagery that you become more civilised and enlightened than any of us."

A slow smile spread its way across Lydia's face, causing lines to appear round her eyes. Arturo sensed an almost ethereal presence, as if she was an immortal witch who would one day cast off her outer raiment to inhabit the body of a new woman. Lydia tilted her head again, as if admiring yet another specimen of a separate species.

"You are unlike any man I have known." Her smile faded and her eyes became sad. "In another world, if we were to begin again, I do believe Henry could have been like you." She smiled and the look of amused pleasure returned. "I do believe I could grow to adore you."

When Evangeline returned, the offer of supper was accepted and the rest of their visit was spent in discussions of the most interesting topics and residents of London. During the carriage ride home, Evangeline spent most of the journey with her head on Arturo's shoulder, having succumbed to the deepest and most welcome slumber. Arturo covered them both with a blanket and kissed the top of his sister's head. He looked out into the dusk at the landscape appearing to settle like a tired child. As he looked down at Evangeline's face and thought of Lydia's lost womanhood, a tear fell onto the blanket. Its salty moisture was instantly absorbed, until only Arturo could ever have said where it had been.

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

Evangeline was crouching by a building which afforded an unobstructed view of the front of Henry's house. Although the year was well into March, the weather was rebellious, with a feral wind which caused the thin trees in the garden to beat their limbs against the railing. Evangeline had bundled on layers of clothing to protect against the biting elements, yet she shivered with dread at the prospect before her. Arturo was already in place at the back of the house, having been allowed to accompany Evangeline, with the strict condition that he merely stand guard and interfere only when absolutely necessary. For his part, Arturo agreed to keep guard only, and not intervene in any way, with the strict condition that Evangeline secrete about her person a pistol.

Bradshaw had appeared at Mr. and Mrs. Gunn's house earlier in the evening, insisting on seeing Mrs. Jekyll about "a most grave and urgent matter." Evangeline realised then that, although she knew what the matter would be and she knew that this day was inevitable, she had harboured the smallest hope, like an invisible talisman, that Providence would intervene and Henry's better part would prevail.

"We can bear it no more," Bradshaw had lamented over and over, wringing his hands in distress until Evangeline felt sick with dread. She knew that Bradshaw had tried valiantly to emulate Poole in his unswerving loyalty to their master, yet part of her wished that they had called for the police and that fate had denied her the opportunity to interfere. And yet imagining the consequence of anyone else meting out to Henry the punishment, or justice, or whatever one chose to call it, caused Evangeline to feel a small shudder. After having persuaded her parents that she had been called to Henry's bedside after a prolonged illness and he simply wished to make peace with his wife, she, Arturo and Bradshaw set off for Berkeley Square. On hearing of the apparent deterioration of Henry and Bradshaw's fearful account of 'that creature' "crying night and day for some sort of medicine, Evangeline knew that situation was desperate, and felt sad for Hastie Lanyon, whose recent demise and untimely death she knew to be as a consequence of the horrors he had seen that night. Lanyon had known the secret of Hyde's progenitor but he had since deceased

and perhaps taken the secret with him, with the possible exception of Gabriel Utterson. To what extent did the households suspect Henry's terrible secret?

Evangeline's clandestine enquiries had gleaned some facts about Danvers Carew which lent to his murder certain mitigating factors. The popular Member of Parliament's genial and affable exterior belied an unsavoury approach towards the treatment of the less privileged groups of society. Certain facts regarding business interests and the passing of laws had been excavated by Evangeline; evidently Carew had been linked with the running of a certain asylum, as well as being a leading voice in punitive, and to Evangeline's mind barbaric, acts of law. Whilst she did not condone deadly violence, she concurred with Lydia's point about savagery and civilisation. It seemed inevitable, natural even, in a primeval sense, that barbaric acts begot barbaric consequences. Yet in this moment, close in proximity to the object of her pursuit, she found herself seeking a dim trace of hopeful light. Perhaps, once confronted with the information that Evangeline knew Henry's secret, he would no longer behave as a hunted animal and would return to sanity by way of rational argument.

She shifted position and rubbed her hands together for warmth as she considered this possibility. But of which 'he' was she speaking? It seemed to the servants that there had been foul play. Jekyll had not been seen for a week and the creature in the doctor's room merely cried intermittently for medicine. There had been a commotion in the house; even Poole, with twenty years of professional composure to his credit, had been rattled with fright into a ferocious mood. Evangeline knew the truth about the identity of this creature, of course, but if Hyde had become the master of Henry's soul, perhaps having obliterated all trace of his liberator, well then how was she to reason with him? Yet there must be in him *some* remnant of Henry's memory and some strain of conscience. Perhaps there existed a faint possibility that Henry, via a compassionate audience granted to Hyde, could be coaxed back to the present rather than confined to the past. But to reason so was to ignore the fact that Hyde's heinous crimes were committed at least with Henry's knowledge, if not his tacit permission. She confessed, with a shameful acknowledgement, that her main motivation for this evening's quest was to assuage her own misgivings that she should have known her husband better.

There was a flurry of activity at the door and Poole emerged, flustered and giving instructions to prohibit any visitors to the house. Evangeline was alarmed at the sight, for Bradshaw had implied that the whole of the servants were quite paralysed with fear. Did this mean, then, that the butler had gone to raise the alarm? She recoiled at the thought, uncertain whether or not she was relieved at the matter being out of her hands entirely or peeved at the loss of opportunity to speak with Hyde and perhaps fulfil a last encounter with Henry. Just as she was becoming upset over her thwarted intentions, Bradshaw appeared, his head turning this way and that in search of his erstwhile mistress. She hesitated, unwilling to reveal herself until she was certain it was prudent to do so. Yet, for whom but her could Bradshaw be on the lookout? She put her fingers to her mouth and whistled loudly, grateful that her father had been blind to her sex when he had taught her such skills. Bradshaw was confused by the sound; on the one hand, who else but the one who had been summoned could have whistled at precisely the assigned time? On the other hand, surely only a fellow, and not one of high standing, would have made such a noise.

Evangeline watched him with irritation, sensing that the question of her sex was the reason behind his reticence. She whistled again, this time with more force, causing him to jolt from his stationary position. He ran towards the sound and stopped a short distance away from Evangeline, creeping as if someone was about to leap at him.

“Here! Bradshaw!” Evangeline called in a short, sharp whisper.

His head whipped round to the sound of her voice and she emerged from the blackness to stand under a street lamp.

“Oh, Mrs. Jekyll,” breathed the footman, “it *is* you.”

“Are you *all* in such a state of jangled nerves?”

“Indeed we are, madam. I was afraid even to come out of the house, for fear there were some of ‘is cronies waitin’ to do us *all* in.”

“I think it unlikely, Bradshaw. No honour among thieves and all that. If the forbidding impression with which he strikes most who see him was not enough to deter

companionship, the danger of allying oneself with a murderous fugitive would drive away all but the most deranged ne'er-do-wells."

Bradshaw nodded without conviction, as if only the repetition of the gesture would persuade him to believe this.

"Come, Bradshaw, screw your courage to the sticking-place."

"Madam?" Bradshaw frowned.

"Be brave." Evangeline forced a smile. She felt far from brave but she needed Bradshaw to believe that she was, for if his fear deepened he may cower from what she was about to ask of him. Yet she was unsure, now that Poole had gone to fetch help, what was expected of her.

"Bradshaw, I assume that Poole is summoning assistance, in which case there seems no need of me."

"But madam, I don't think Mr. Utterson will be of much use. I mean no insult to him, but he is of more advanced years than Mr. Hyde, and he will be just as afraid, I'm certain."

"But why has Poole not gone to fetch a policeman?"

"I reckon he's thinking of the doctor's reputation – another scandal, if you follow me madam."

"Really Bradshaw, I am puzzled. If you all think Dr. Jekyll has come to some harm, what am I supposed to do about this?" She remembered that it was only she who knew the true identity of Edward Hyde, so she quickly added: "If your master has been done away with, I will be putting myself in the utmost danger, Bradshaw."

The footman was wringing his hands again.

"I was thinking...you see...you are a lady, madam, and he may be more...well, you are the doctor's wife, and he may..." Bradshaw shrugged in defeat.

Evangeline studied his face intensely. Yes, of course. Of course! *One* of them must know, they all live in the same house, after all. Henry has proven himself to be less invincible than

he believed himself to be. It was perfectly possible that, given his fatal error, he made many more minor errors along the way. And why should it not be Bradshaw who worked it out? Perhaps Poole was not so different to his aunt; both had been blind to the true power of their masters. But nobody would take much notice of Bradshaw, which would make it easier for him to watch and listen without fear of attracting unwanted attention. Yet he could not voice his certainties to anyone; who would believe him? Evangeline shook her head with impatience; *of course* he did not know, otherwise he would not have placed her in such danger. Had she not seen the transformation with her own eyes, the report of such an occurrence would have been beyond the limits of credibility, even for her fanciful imagination.

“Come along, Bradshaw, we must do something.” They set off towards the house and Evangeline, seeing that the footman was approaching the front, grabbed his arm and put her finger to her mouth in a silencing gesture. She shook her head and motioned to the side of the house, shaking her head impatiently at his hesitancy. They walked round the corner, into the by-street and to the back of the house. Evangeline signalled to her brother, whose acknowledging gesture gave the footman a fright of such proportion that Evangeline had to wrestle him to a sitting position, her hand covering his mouth to muffle the cry of shock.

“It is just Arturo,” she hissed, then immediately softened. “I did not warn you, it was most remiss of me.” She took her hand from his mouth, smoothed and patted his jacket with a conciliatory gesture and helped him to his feet. By a combination of assistance from both men and a sturdy drainpipe, Evangeline climbed up to the upper storey and knocked on the window.

A figure leapt at the pane and Evangeline almost fell in fright, for the face that peered out was neither Henry nor entirely Edward Hyde, but something between the two. She stifled the urge to cry out and he recoiled in shock at the sight of her. He disappeared from view but she knew he would be beside the window. She dismissed Bradshaw, asking him to keep her abreast of developments within the house.

“Henry, let me in. I must urgently speak with you.”

There was a moment's hesitation before an unfamiliar voice replied, "you must leave, Evangeline. It is not safe for you here."

"Henry, this is nonsense. Allow me just to speak with you, I beg of you."

"You have seen for yourself I am not Henry. Will you have me permit you to enter in order for you to mock me?"

"You *are* Henry. I know your secret. You are Hyde, too. Let me in, Henry. Please."

There was a moment's pause and the window pane slid open slowly. He emerged from the opening and reached out to help Evangeline into the room, unaware of the pistol having knocked against the lead piping and falling into the shrubbery below and not seeing the momentary look of alarm on Evangeline's face. Once inside, the light within the room allowed her to see more fully the extent to which Henry had changed. His face, now sadly altered, bore the traces of the handsome doctor, yet with a tragic mask of deformity. Evangeline reached out and touched him, stroking his cheek as her eyes filled with tears.

"Oh Henry," she whispered in a burst of emotion. She buckled and Henry held her, guiding her to a chair. He sat opposite her and watched her cry, unable to comfort her. After a few moments, he shuffled away from her, took a few paces and sat heavily in a chair. He gave a sad laugh.

Evangeline composed herself and, dabbing at her eyes with a handkerchief, asked "You find, in all this tragedy, some comedy?"

" 'I rise from dreams of thee...and a spirt in my feet...has led me, who knows how...to thy chamber-window, Sweet!' How very like you, Evangeline, to subvert the tradition." Henry's eyes flashed and his mouth twisted in bitterness and despair. "Yet I could not very well appear at *your* window, having forsaken the mantle of the handsome suitor."

"Well may *you* speak of subversion." Evangeline threw the handkerchief to the floor, exasperated with the constant flow of her tears. She smiled at Henry. "Surely your recollection of such verse is a sign that no small part of your civilised nature remains?"

Again Henry gave a sad laugh. "Let us not debate the paradox of poetry and a civilised nature." He rose from his chair and paced the room once more. He returned to the chair and faced his wife.

"Evangeline," he said in a coarse voice which cut short her grief. "I am glad to see you, but you should not have come. I am much changed and there is no chance of my recovery. A few lines of remembered poetry are not the horizon's light you so desperately seek."

She sensed that his flat tone belied many layers of emotion; nevertheless she felt irritated at...at what? The fact that he assumed she was there in the hope that he recovered? The fact that he had caused so much pain to others? The fact that he had not trusted her with his innermost thoughts and emotions? She could sit and think about all of it, she could talk for hours with Henry, and still she could not express *everything* that she felt.

"I can see that, Henry." Her voice was tired and sad. "I have thought about everything you have done, and I have understood some of it. But the rest of it is a mystery."

"Then you must leave it as a mystery."

"I cannot, Henry," she said hotly. "I was your wife – I *am* your wife. If we were to change positions, would you accept such a dismissal from me?"

He looked at her but could not hold her gaze; his eyes flickered and he looked to the floor. She knew the futility of pleading, yet she could not help herself.

"Why did you do this? I thought we were happy. We *could* have been."

Henry kept his head down but looked at Evangeline.

"We *were* happy. But I could not rest until I could be sure that the worst parts of me would not triumph."

"Do you not imagine that many besides you must ensure that their worst part does not triumph? Yet they do not risk their very lives, Henry, they do not run amok and commit the worst atrocities. Instead they feed their better parts and neglect their worst parts. You are human, why did you insist on treating yourself as a beast?"

He rose with a swiftness which startled her, turning his back to her and dashing to the floor all manner of papers, bottles and chemical paraphernalia. Of the objects which remained intact, her attention was caught by a small phial rolling rhythmically across the desk, stopping just before the edge, as if an invisible finger had pressed on the glass at exactly the right moment.

"You know nothing, Evangeline," he snarled. "You know nothing of my worst parts, and you know nothing of feeling as a beast. You have no fear that your true self must never be discovered."

"Indeed, Henry?" she said in a measured tone, indignant but not wishing to stir his anger further. "And yet you presume to know exactly what is in *my* heart and mind."

He sprang towards her and gripped her face. His voice was savage: "I do not presume, I *know*. I know there is nothing in your heart and mind which could compare to the darkness in my soul. I *know* this."

Evangeline held his gaze, refusing to show her fear. Henry's eyes softened and he loosened his grasp. He slumped on the chair and held his head in his hands.

"Perhaps you are right, Henry," Evangeline said in a clear voice. "I could not have done to anyone what you did to me and I could not have treated an old man with such brutality."

His head snapped up and he studied her for a few moments. His breathing was laboured and his posture seemed weighed down by her discovery of his sins.

He began to explain his story and to attempt to justify his actions by passing the blame entirely onto Edward Hyde. Evangeline listened to him but she remonstrated with him and she railed against him. She had expected to feel a degree of empathy and compassion, but she had not expected the strength of passion in her opposition to his arguments. Thoughts of what he had done burned in her like a purging vengeance from God. She was not convinced of his pity towards Edward, as if he was a separate entity. She was not touched by his lamentation that his first supply of the salt he needed for the draught had in fact been

impure but it was this impurity which lent efficacy to the draught. For the past week London had been ransacked on his behalf for a fresh supply, but none was found. Now there was not chance that Henry could return to his original form. The doom that was closing on Jekyll and on Hyde had changed and crushed them both. He/they would sit shuddering and weeping in his chair, pace up and down the room and give ear to every sound of menace.

Evangeline fell silent, resigned to the fact that Henry was beyond help and unable to see reason. She looked around the room and noticed the remnants of letters in the fireplace, and once again her sights alighted on the phial and she tilted her head to read the label: **PRUSSIC ACID**. She vaguely recalled Henry once telling her that he was working on experiments to do with mining gold and silver, but her mind was preoccupied with the memory of the conversation between the two women on the night she had waited in the yard of The Harp tavern. For a few moments, she imagined doing just as Annie had done to her brutish husband. She could do it so easily. She had the opportunity and, after all, was she not merely expediting the end, and with the absence of prolonged agony, dishonour and scandal? She realised, with a start, that this cold logic narrowed the gap between her thinking and that of Henry. If she examined her heart, she knew it was revenge and not leniency that she sought. Besides, to degrade Henry in such a manner would also degrade her, so that her sense of decency may never recover. She looked around the room again, at the defaced pages of Henry's books, a will bearing the name of Gabriel John Utterson as beneficiary, a brief note to Utterson, a written confession, and the destroyed portrait of Henry's father.

"Which of you destroyed the portrait, Henry?"

"Edward, naturally." His voice was dismissive.

"I see. And what would incite him to such an act, never having known your father?"

Henry looked at her intently but gave no answer.

Evangeline moved a book towards her and read one of the scrawled phrases.

"Flectere si nequeo speros, Acheronta movebo." She looked at Henry with raised eyebrows.

Henry shook his head. "None of it matters any longer. Do not ask me to translate."

" 'If Heaven I cannot bend, then Hell I will arouse.' Really, Henry, do not imagine that you must attend a certain school to be competent in short-winded Latinity."

Again Henry gave no answer, his shoulders drooping with defeat.

"You are a man of extremes. In between Heaven and Hell, there is an Earth. *This* we can bend. Over our selves we *can* be masters." Evangeline's expression was pleading.

"I *could* have been my own master. Yet you forget that it is *Hyde* who wished to arouse the powers of Hell."

Evangeline regarded him with disdain.

"*You* forget that I know you and Edward Hyde are not separate beings."

He straightened in his chair and stared at her. "You blame me for what *he* did? You blame me for what happened when I was not *myself*?"

"You were a *part* of yourself Henry; that you cannot deny. As the two sides of yourself, you are *both* responsible. In fact, you as the instigator and inventor are more responsible."

Henry began to laugh, but his mirth was ended by the pangs of deeper transformation. His body, rent by the change, shook with a violence that terrified them both, and his face contorted in pain. He fell to his knees and cried out with an animal sound. Evangeline went to him and comforted him, knowing that his suffering would only worsen until there was no remnant of Henry. Finally he lifted his head, and Henry was no longer recognisable. He roused himself into a standing position and began once more to pace across the room. His steps fell lightly and oddly, with a certain swing, for they went so slowly; it was different indeed from the heavy creaking tread of Henry Jekyll. Evangeline knew she had little time left, and she began to weep.

Henry looked at her strangely. "Are you crying for yourself or for me, Mrs. Jekyll?"

"I am crying for us both. I am crying for the world."

His response was fully of fury:

“Then spare your tears, for the world would not cry for you!”

“Yet you did not punish the world, Henry; you punished yourself.”

“Those who were punished suffered at the hands of Edward Hyde.”

“Then it seems that he, more than you, knew that, as a woman once said, ‘I am no bird, and no net ensnares me; I am a free human being with an independent will’.”

Henry gave a bitter laugh.

“He was no more a free human being than I am, and if you believe yourself to be free, then your mistake is even more tragic than my own.”

Evangeline had no further words for either Henry or Edward. The time had come. She reached out and touched him gently. He gave her a curious look and took a step back.

“Henry,” she whispered. “Come to me, I wish to hold you one more time.”

“I am not Henry!” he shouted at her in a harsh voice.

“Then who are you?”

“Look at me, Evangeline. Damnation, woman, I am closer to Edward than Henry. Do not presume to mock me.”

“You forget that I too have been intimate with Edward. Perhaps I judged him less harshly than even you did.”

He seemed to consider this, but declined to respond.

“Why did you not listen to someone, Henry? Why did you not listen to *me*? You could have done such good!”

“Do you still not see? I have the key to the *ultimate* good!”

“The key of which you speak opened the wrong door, Henry. The door that led to what you have become. I know you still believe in the potential of your discovery, Henry,

and I too can see the good it could have led to. But it was a diabolical course you took because you did not first decide which one of you was the monster.”

He opened his mouth to protest but every argument which sprang to mind seemed futile.

“Henry, you are sick and beyond recovery,” Evangeline said in a low voice, the tears flowing unchecked down her cheeks. She knew he would either be brought to justice swiftly or live as a murderous fugitive. It was too late for him to be helped and only the threat of the asylum or the scaffold remained.

“But I cannot pretend that I hate you,” she continued. “Indeed a part of me still loves you, and that means loving you *and* Edward. Surely you will not continue to deny that you are one and the same?”

Henry gave no answer, but sank to the floor, his head in his hands. “I am so, so tired, Evangeline,” he whispered. He began to silently weep.

Evangeline picked up the glass phial marked **PRUSSIC ACID** and hid it inside her sleeve. She fetched a cup and placed the kettle on the small stove.

Henry looked up. “What are you doing, Evangeline?”

“I am making you some cocoa, Henry.” Her body convulsed with a silent sob.

Henry gave a long, deep sigh. “Go home, Evangeline. I am finished, I see no way out.”

“Henry, I am your only friend now. Let me soothe you.” She paced the room until the kettle boiled, then made the cocoa drink and added the contents of the phial and lots of sugar. She joined Henry on the floor and set down the cocoa beside him. She held him close and they wept together. In mere minutes Henry was suffering the first pangs of poisoning. He tensed from the pain in his stomach and instantly he knew what Evangeline had done, yet his overwhelming feeling for her was gratitude, knowing that she had saved him from a worse fate and he would soon be free. If he did not have the courage to be a self-destroyer, she certainly had the courage to be a murderer. He pulled at her sleeve and struggled to speak through his convulsions.

"I only wish you to know one thing, Evangeline. There is one thing I am *not* guilty of." He inhaled sharply as another pang and a wave of nausea and dizziness took hold of him.

Evangeline sobbed silently and clung to her dying husband, cradling his face. He was shivering yet his skin felt hot. "It's the end, Henry, it matters not. I am not your priest."

Henry gave a pained and bitter smile. "I have no need of a priest, neither have I a desire to be forgiven by one. What can he tell me about which I have not already seen? I have experienced heaven and hell and I have no desire to revisit either." He was seized by another convulsion and his head ached as if he had spent a long night at the tavern.

Evangeline waited until his body relaxed once more and said, "I have no doubt that you have seen hell, but if you experienced heaven you would surely have been at peace since then."

"Ah Evangeline," Henry smiled weakly, "even now you attempt to peddle the benefits of goodness and optimism."

Evangeline considered Henry and shook her head. "You are so blind that in these very circumstances you align me with goodness and optimism."

Henry looked up at her and studied her face. "You are full of goodness, do not allow yourself to feel that, in your last meeting with me, you have fallen from grace and know some of what I feel." He stopped abruptly as Evangeline began sobbing again. He sat up, despite his discomfort, and held her against his chest. He stroked her hair and whispered to her, "you do me a kindness."

Evangeline noticed that Henry's lips appeared as if the blood had drained from them and that he had a rash on his neck. She touched his face gently and did not, at this moment, feel as if she was doing him a kindness. After a few minutes Henry was once again convulsing and yet appeared to be drowsy. Evangeline kept reminding herself that whatever agony he was suffering would be more short-lived than the agonies he would have suffered had she not intervened. Yet the pistol would have been kinder.

When he had recovered Henry moved to his desk and took up a pen and writing paper.

"Whoever are you writing to?" asked Evangeline.

"I have written my confession. I will enclose this note as an addition, which will make no mention of you and no suspicion will fall on you. I shall leave the envelope on the desk for Poole to find." As Henry opened the envelope and inserted the note, he looked at Evangeline. "As you are still my wife, I have provided for you accordingly and I see no reason to change that." At that moment his face became distorted and Evangeline recoiled in shock and anguish. Whether the hideous change had come about due to the poison or Henry's own medicine she could not say, but she felt a rush of fear and guilt. Henry fell from his chair to the floor and she held his hand, sobbing, as his body shook.

"Henry, I cannot accept any provision from you, it would be as a torture to me."

"It is the only gesture I can make."

"I cannot accept, Henry. I *will* not. If you must make a gesture, remove me entirely from your will. In fact, I will do so."

Henry moved to the armchair, exhausted but protesting, "You cannot, Evangeline, it may arouse suspicion."

"I have seen your signature many times, Henry. Nobody will suspect Hyde or me of the forgery, since we would write our own names if we wished to benefit from your will. Which name do you wish me to substitute?"

Henry sighed. "I wish you to have everything."

"I will give it all away. Give me a name, Henry."

Henry sighed again. "Utterson. Gabriel John Utterson."

"What is this one thing you wanted to tell me, the thing you say you are not guilty of?" Evangeline asked as she wrote.

"The girl, the child," he managed to say despite his laboured breathing. He curled into himself slightly and clutched his stomach.

“What girl?” Evangeline asked, looking intently at Henry as she sat in the chair next to him. She feared that Henry was experiencing hallucinations.

“The girl who was trampled by Hyde –” he caught himself before he continued, “by me. I am sure you heard, it was the talk of the neighbourhood for quite some time.”

“Oh. Yes, of course.” She studied Henry briefly, wondering if he was laying a trap and knew about her espionage. “What about the girl?”

“I didn’t trample her. I knew of her and when I chanced upon her on the street corner and saw that she was in some kind of trouble, I proceeded to where she lives. I was angry, uncontrollably angry, and in my haste to avenge her, instead of picking her up when she fell, I carried on. You must understand, I did not intentionally hurt her, I merely saw only what needed to be done. I make no excuses, I am not interested in redemption or forgiveness, but I see no purpose in accepting the blame for a nefarious deed for which I am not responsible, and which in fact disguises a far more heinous crime.”

Evangeline was puzzled. He was too articulate to be delusional, yet she did not understand any of what he was saying. “Henry, what are you talking about?”

There was a long silence as Henry again struggled to breathe. Yet he seemed determined to convince Evangeline of his innocence in this matter.

“The child was running away from her family. Did you not wonder at the lateness of the hour and the girl being on the street?”

“Of course I did. I –” she stopped herself just as she was about to reveal her whereabouts that morning. “When I was told about the girl, my first thought was that it was strange she should be running in the street in the early hours of the morning. Why are you telling me this Henry, of what import is the matter to either of us now?” Evangeline felt herself becoming more and more exasperated with Henry. Why, in God’s name must he choose now to appear altruistic and eager to absolve himself of this wrongdoing?

“I told you, she was running away from her family, Evangeline. Her family was about to have her committed. She is a headstrong girl, I grant, but she is not insane. Indeed, I would have been proud of such a girl had I been her father.”

Despair swelled in Evangeline's heart and she could not speak for weeping.

"Evangeline, I beg you, keep a watch on her. Don't let them ruin her." He drew his breath sharply and cried out in pain.

Evangeline waited before she asked, "why did you pay her father?"

"I could not draw unwanted attention and publicity to myself, for obvious reasons, as you now know. I should not have paid them, but I should not have done many things and now it is too late to rectify those sins. It is not too late to save that girl."

Poole had returned to Berkeley Square and with him he had brought Gabriel Utterson. Bradshaw was summoned and told to go round the corner with a good stick and take his post at the laboratory door, lest any malefactor seek to escape by the back. He was given ten minutes to get to his station, before Poole and Utterson took action. He intended to carry word to Evangeline, but the knife boy was instructed to go with him and Bradshaw didn't wish to risk anyone but he knowing of Evangeline's presence within the doctor's cabinet.

"Jekyll," cried Utterson, with a loud voice, "I demand to see you." He paused for a moment, but there came no reply, only a muffled sound of irritation and cursing. "I give you fair warning, our suspicions are aroused, and I must and shall see you, if not by fair means, then by foul – if not of your consent, then by brute force!"

"Utterson," said the voice, "for God's sake have mercy!"

"Ah, that's not Jekyll's voice – it's Hyde's!" cried Utterson. "Down with the door, Poole."

The blow shook the building, and the red baize door leaped against the lock and hinges. A dismal screech, as of mere animal terror, rang from the cabinet.

"Eva, stay with me," Henry whispered in a hoarse voice, struggling to breathe. He convulsed in pain and his face contorted with the strain of clinging to life. Evangeline held him tightly, placing a tender kiss on his forehead and whispering into his ear:

“Rose leaves, when the rose is dead, are heaped for the beloved’s bed, and so thy thoughts, when thou art gone, love itself shall slumber on.” She placed the phial in Henry’s hand and held his fingers around it. Her tears were profuse as she watched his agony in the throes of his final moments before he lost consciousness forever. A terrible sound escaped from her – half cry, half scream – as she gently lay him down and moved towards the window. She scrambled downwards, her vision distorted by her tears and blinded to the ascending Arturo, who had found the pistol and was determined, after hearing his sister’s anguished cry, to do whatever was necessary.

Up went the axe again, and again the panels crashed and the frame bounded; four times the blow fell, until finally the lock burst and the wreck of the door fell inwards on the carpet. The besiegers stood back and peered in. For a few moments all they saw was the quiet lamplight and the glow of the fire. The kettle was singing and several drawers lay open, as if it were the most commonplace room that night in London.

As Evangeline and Arturo ran into the night, Poole and Utterson ventured further into the room and came upon the body of a man contorted and still twitching. Utterson drew near on tiptoe, turned the man on his back, and beheld the face of Edward Hyde. The cords of his face still moved with a semblance of life, but life was quite gone; and by the crushed phial in the hand and the strong smell of kernels that hung upon the air, Utterson knew that the wretch had taken his own life. A thorough search of the house and gardens was undertaken, but nowhere was there any trace of Henry Jekyll, dead or alive. At ten o’clock they went out, locking the door of the theatre behind them; Utterson, once more leaving the servants gathered about the fire in the hall, trudged back to his office with several papers in his hand. At midnight he determined that nothing was to be gained from the consequence of scandal. With a heart full of sadness for his tragic friend, he took the letters from Lanyon and Jekyll and threw them into the fire.

Bradshaw had arrived home with only ten minutes to spare before the birth of the child. He paced outside the bedroom, listening to the soothing noises of Hope’s older sister and grandmother, in complete contrast to the sounds coming from Hope that made his stomach lurch and his teeth clench. Finally he was ushered inside the room to find his wife cradling the infant. The grandmother and sister went to make tea and eventually Hope turned her

eyes toward her husband. They did not speak for a while, Hope looking sickened while she held her baby as if it were about to be snatched from her arms. Eventually Bradshaw took her hand in his and said softly "we'll do all right. Nobody needs to know." But unlike most new fathers his curiosity was not concerning the sex of the infant. Hope was now weeping softly and Bradshaw stroked her hand, yet his eyes did not leave the infant. He believed that parents could determine the character of a child one way or another, yet that creature in Berkeley Square was too much the barbarian for Bradshaw to imagine that his progeny may be left unscathed by its father's savage nature. He gingerly moved the shawl from the child's face and studied the features, noting the shock of black hair. Bradshaw forced a reassuring smile for his wife, soothing her with gentle noises and loving strokes. Yet in his mind, as he looked again at their child, was the question '*Whose nature will out, Jekyll's or Hyde's?*'

CRITICAL COMMENTARY

Much has been written about Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, with various aspects given emphasis in both readings and retellings of the story. Although Stevenson's novella can be enjoyed as a straightforward late Victorian Gothic thriller, most critics agree that the story represents a deeper reflection of issues pertinent to not just the nineteenth century, but to humanity in general, which is the likely reason that the story continues to be adapted and examined in a variety of ways. For example, Doane and Hodges (1989) analyse *Jekyll and Hyde* from a feminist psychoanalytic perspective which highlights the "collaboration between the masculine and feminine that subverts the identity of each" and emphasises the context of "a time in which gender roles were shifting." Michael Davis (2006) places the focus of his study on "the relationship between Jekyll and Hyde and contemporary writing about the mind," in the context of psychological and medical discourses in the late nineteenth century. Similarly, Jill Matus (2009) discusses *Jekyll and Hyde* in the context of Victorian fiction that engages with the mind's response to overwhelming emotions. She argues that Stevenson's story is a "case of the complex imbrication of literary and psychological discourse" as it engages with the findings of research on multiple personality disorder and disassociated memory and is "responding to the idea that the unitary self is illusory" (p.15; 19; 160). Anne Stiles (2012, p. 5;7;16;19) suggests that *Jekyll and Hyde* is loosely based on two famous French case studies. Jekyll is a "criminally insane doctor suffering from hemispheric imbalance," having allowed his "right-brain tendencies" to dominate. Stiles argues that Stevenson is engaging with the late Victorian scientific discourses relating to evolution and degeneration "as a means [...] to simultaneously mimic and critique the apparent objectivity of the medical case study." Sharon Packer (2015) also reads the story in the context of medical discourse, but claims that Jekyll is suffering from a form of dementia. However, she also sees in the story an exploration of gender roles and an anticipation of "the Suffragettes, the flappers and the second and third wave feminists" (p.53). Issues of privacy and jurisdiction of the self are examined by Cathrine O. Frank (2010), while for Charles Campbell (2014), Hyde "represents the city in the person of a male sadist" with "women and feminine values as the victims of the sadistic male of the city." There are myriad interpretations which view Stevenson's story in various ways, including "homosexualist, misogynistic, a tract on sibling rivalry, a

statement of position by a political reactionary, and much else" (McLynn, 1994, p.257). Brian Rose suggests that *Jekyll and Hyde*'s repeated use as a 'tracer text' for adaptations is explained by its "motifs, themes and/or images of archetypic import" whose malleable qualities serve to "provide culturally familiar metaphors through which to explore the outer reaches of human psychology[...]" (1996, pp.15; 19; 20). This is why Stevenson's tale continues to inspire authors to write their own fictional revisions of the story, despite the claim by one critic that although the story "makes a bonny film," it "disappoints adult re-reading" (Alexander, 2000, p.304). Such a dismissal fails to take into consideration the fact that many adults have not only enjoyed the story but have prolonged its life through many and varied interpretations, which supports Harold Bloom's notion that "there must be a profound act of reading that is a kind of falling in love with a literary work." (1997, p.xxiii). I will therefore begin this commentary with an explanation of my reading of the literary work I fell in love with, which underpins the writing of my novel.

My aim was to write a parallel narrative which offers to the reader the 'history' behind Jekyll's behaviour. The starting point was the acknowledgement by Stevenson that the idea for his story came to him in a dream. In his introduction to the novella, John Hampden (1994, p.13) tells us that "one winter night in 1885" Stevenson was woken by his wife who was alarmed at his cries of horror in his sleep. In his biography of Stevenson, Frank McLynn (1994, pp.67-68; 255) emphasises the role of the unconscious in Stevenson's artistic life, and his use of dreams as a direct inspiration for his storytelling, including a recurrent dream which was partially incorporated in the scene in which Sir Danvers Carew is murdered. Freud admitted that "creative writers anticipated his findings by their own psychological intuition" (Robertson, 1999, p. xiv), an example of which is *Jekyll and Hyde*. The story was inspired by a dream and therefore Stevenson's *unconscious* intuition, which is not to deny the *conscious* psychological intuition which the author drew on to portray to such great effect the tortured psyche of Jekyll. The novelist Siri Hustvedt (2012, p.4) suggests that creative writers continue to be influenced by their own psychological intuition when she claims that, "writing novels [...] is an embodied act, not an intellectualisation. Unconscious processes struggling toward articulation are at work in both psychoanalysis and art." Put more simply, and to paraphrase Adrienne Rich, stories are like dreams: in them you put what you don't know you know (1980, p.19). Hélène Cixous, in her book *Stigmata*, makes explicit the

connection between writing and the unconscious expression in dreams: “[w]hat is outside of us during the day takes place in us during the night. In dreams I have witnessed my own suppression” (1998, p.72). Related to this point, the scene in chapter ten of my adaptation, in which Jekyll imagines ripping a hair from an old lady’s face, is based on a dream I had not long before I wrote that particular chapter. As Freud states, the “connection between the dream-content and waking life [...] is capable of concealing itself for a long time,” (Freud, 1999, p.12), therefore the absence of an explicit link made by Stevenson which connects the story to personal thought or experience does not exclude the possibility that many unconscious connections exist to solidify in the shape of Jekyll/Hyde. The role of the unconscious in dreams is an axiomatic principle of psychoanalytic theory, whose observations demonstrate that “dreams not infrequently bring to light in an unmistakable way the unconscious contents that are causal factors in a neurosis” (Jung, 2001, p.3).

Although no interpretation can claim to be conclusive, Gothic fiction lends itself particularly well to psychoanalytic criticism, although as one critic argues, “perhaps we have it backward; instead of using Freud to read Gothic, we should use Gothic to read Freud” (Williams, 1995, p.245). Gothic fiction frequently portrays a fractured surface and a Doppelgänger, as in Stevenson’s novel, onto which unacknowledged impulses may be displaced (Robertson, *ibid.*, p. xxxv). A single figure can represent the condensation of several meanings and the reader “can find mechanisms of doubling, displacement, and mirroring even in the most ostensibly solid works of realism” (*ibid.*). The title for my thesis could easily have been *The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Dr Freud*, emphasising as it does the concepts originated by Freud, such as displacement and condensation. Freud (1999, p.225) states that “the production of collective and composite figures is one of the main methods of condensation in dreams,” therefore, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the Hyde persona of Jekyll represents a condensing of several aspects of late Victorian society which could have been on Stevenson’s mind at the time, including (but not restricted to) female emancipation. Leonard Jackson (2000) claims that some Freudian concepts are an essential part of explaining the workings of the mind because they offer a theory of unconscious fantasy which can be applied to every aspect of life. Indeed, before the writings of Freud and Jung provided us with such psychological concepts as ego, id, shadow, the unconscious mind and so on, nineteenth-century fiction reflected an interest in psychology

and the notion of the double. For instance, Edgar Allan Poe's short story 'William Wilson' (1839) and Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novella *The Double* (1846) both express the notion of a menacing doppelgänger.

In *Jekyll and Hyde*, Stevenson seems to anticipate Freud's insights into society's problematic and destructive attitudes towards sexuality. In her book *Feminism and Psychoanalytic Theory* (1989), Nancy Chodorow argues that psychoanalytic theory, in paying explicit attention to sex and gender, is correlative with a feminist approach. She suggests that Freud demonstrated the link between psychological and social forms of gender oppression and that he founded a theory which argues that women are made and not born. This sentiment was echoed years later by Simone de Beauvoir (1997, p.295) in her book *The Second Sex* when she claimed that "one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman." Chodorow further states in *Femininities Masculinities Sexualities* (1994, p.14) that many of the female members of the second generation of analysts were attracted to psychoanalysis partly because "Freud saw women as sexual subjects rather than objects." She emphasises Freud's apparent feminist tendencies in drawing to the reader's attention a paper entitled 'Civilised Sexual Morality and Modern Nervousness' (1908), which criticises the cultural and societal conditions in which women are kept in the dark sexually and are therefore unprepared for one of the more pleasurable aspects of marriage (*ibid.*, p.17). This perspective is in direct contrast to many Victorian doctors and moralists, including William Acton, who in 1857 published a treatise in which he claimed that "the best mothers, wives and managers of households know little or nothing of sexual indulgences." He also reassured young men who were frightened of marriage, in case "the marital duties they will have to undertake are beyond their exhausted strength" (Acton quoted in Reynolds & Humble, 1993, p. 13). In her book *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (1975), Juliet Mitchell also draws the reader's attention to Freud's emphasis on the "extremely inhibiting and destructive effect of feminine sexual ignorance." Three years prior to the 1908 publication, Freud had stated that "in all of us, throughout life, the libido normally oscillates between male and female objects." Williams (1995, p. 247) argues that Freud's theories on dreams and the unconscious "dealt mortal blows" to the system of patriarchy by conceding the power of the female and the power of those forces excluded in Western culture, such as "sexuality, non-linguistic modes of meaning, madness, dreams."

It is my argument that Stevenson's story represents the process of "condensation, in which different dream-elements are fused" and where, with psychoanalytic examination, "different people may be identified" (Robertson, 1999, p.xiv). The composite figure of Jekyll/Hyde represents "expressions of something not yet consciously recognised or conceptually formulated" (Jung, p.21) and the manifestation of the compression, or condensation, of an entire train of thought concentrated in a single element (Freud, 1999, p.391). The source of a dream can be a significant inner experience "which is then represented in the dream by reference to a recent but trivial impression." A constituent of the dream can either belong to the ideas of the dreamer's realm, or it can be brought into this realm via a "web of connections" (Freud, 1999, p.138). I want to suggest that the Jekyll/Hyde persona represents the *unconscious* composite figure of: the father; patriarchy; the son and the repressed feminine instinct. Therefore the complex and conflicted symbolism within *Jekyll and Hyde* signifies the multi-faceted identities of the characters. The father is represented by Stevenson's own father, Thomas, but also by Jekyll as the keeper and progenitor of Hyde; therefore Jekyll also represents patriarchy but also resistance against it, thus both he and Hyde represent the two sides of his repressed feminine impulse, one passive and the other ferocious. The son signifies Stevenson himself, but also Jekyll who keeps in his cabinet a portrait of his father, which is smashed by Hyde, who also, as the creation of Jekyll, represents the son.

In the waking state just before sleep, the thinking is characterised by concepts, as opposed to images. As sleep approaches, involuntary ideas emerge. Once asleep, the dream hallucinates and produces images of perception, rather than remembered representations (Freud, 1999, p.43). So, while it may seem far-fetched to suggest that Stevenson, on that winter's night in Bournemouth in 1885, was consciously thinking about such disconnected concepts as his father and his repressed feminine instincts, once sleep approached, and the process of involuntary ideas from his unconscious began, it is not so difficult to imagine the dense web of connections that may have been produced by his perceptions, particularly if we bear in mind that the house he slept in, 'Skerryvore,' had been bought by his father, and was named after the lighthouse constructed by his uncle (McLynn, 1994, pp. 8; 239). Therefore, this aspect of Stevenson's psyche can be identified in *Jekyll and Hyde* by Jekyll's will being the driving force behind Utterson's investigations, and Jekyll's house being "an

updated version of the gothic's traditional 'contested castle,' a signpost of inheritance and the site of a battle for legitimate power" and also one which sees Jekyll reduced "to the status of a powerless and imprisoned female gothic heroine" (Davison, 2007, p.151-2). Everywhere were reminders of his indebtedness to his father and the legacy of the achievements of his engineering family. The elements which are admitted into the dream are those which represent points of intersection and which have many meanings with respect to interpretation (Freud, 1999, p.216). The seemingly straightforward concern of the main character, Jekyll, is one of ridding himself of corruption but this disguises the aforementioned deeper issues and therefore this disguise, or sublimation, constitutes the psychoanalytic concept of displacement, whereby the emotional significance of the dream (and, in this case, the text) is separated from the true content and attached to a different object in order not to raise the suspicions of the ego's censor. So, corruption in the context of Stevenson's story can mean dishonesty/deception/double-dealing in the sense that Jekyll has been deceitful and dishonest about his true nature, which includes not just the explicit cruelty and depravity, but also the raw, natural, wild female impulse. Displacement works by "transferring emotional intensity from the centre of the dream-thought to its marginal components" (Robertson, p.1999, xiv) and in this way the personification of Hyde can be said to dilute the intensity of the idea of the repressed feminine because, taken at face value, he is so far away from what we think of as feminine, and especially the Victorian idea of femininity. This further endorses the idea that the dream-thought "uses visual images that are also found in relatively primitive forms of expression," (ibid.), and Hyde himself represents an uncivilised incarnation of the less civilised side of Jekyll and a primitive version of the feminine instinct.

McLynn (1994, p.265) states that critics of *Jekyll and Hyde* have pointed out that Hyde is Jekyll's creation and as such, is his son, therefore "the slaying of Sir Danvers Carew by Hyde looks like disguised patricide" and the story "evinces the maturing of many persistent themes in his *oeuvre* hitherto, as well as providing interesting clues to his deep anxieties." A much earlier biographer notes of Stevenson that "very significant is his conclusion that the natural love is stronger from parent to child than from child to parent" (Steuart, 1924, p.277, part 1). In the chapter entitled 'The Last Night,' Jekyll tells us that "Jekyll had more than a father's interest; Hyde had more than a son's indifference." This can be interpreted

as the two sides of the Jekyll persona being more intense versions of Stevenson and his father. McLynn (1994, p.69) tells us that “the father had never overcome his feelings of disappointment that the son had failed to pursue a legal career” and Steuart, (1924, p.199, part 1) states that “his father [...] continued to protest vehemently that Louis was wasting his time and ruining his prospects. Law was at least respectable, and a potential judge in the family was a more heartening prospect than a nondescript author struggling for a foothold.” It is not difficult to see that the reason why, in the chapter entitled ‘Search for Mr. Hyde,’ the narrator of Stevenson’s story details the letters after Jekyll’s name, indicating his professional accomplishments, which includes a law qualification – L.L.D.

(www.law.cam.ac.uk). I would suggest that this detail symbolises the ‘Jekyll’ part of Stevenson wishing to please his father and to live up to his expectations. “One of the sources that dreams draw upon for material for reproduction, some of it not remembered or employed in the mental activity of waking life, is the life of childhood” (Freud, 1999, p.15). Jekyll remembers his days as a boy, when he “had walked with my father’s hand.” So far, so Oedipal.

Jekyll’s anxieties may also be said to reflect both the concerns of the late Victorian era and the religious background of his creator, reflected in Jekyll’s attitude towards himself and his shortcomings, and by the way he ‘plays God’ in order to reach a more godlike status, but also in his reverential recollection of his father, whose portrait is eventually destroyed by Hyde. That Jekyll’s father represents Stevenson’s own father may be said to be symbolised by the defacement of Jekyll’s pious book with blasphemous scrawled notes, ostensibly written by Hyde but in Jekyll’s “own hand.” Blasphemy may still have been imagined as heinous in the Stevenson household as it had remained a capital offense in Scotland until 1813, arguably the reason that “the country’s harsh background of dogmatic Calvinism sharply inflects the fictions of Scottish writers from James Hogg to Robert Louis Stevenson” (Marsh, 1998, p.14). Stevenson, encouraged by his cousin Bob, questioned the religion of his childhood, resulting in conflicts with his father, at the peak of which, “his father rained down imprecations on his head – ‘careless infidel’, ‘horrible atheist’ [...]” (McLynn, 1994, pp.60-61). “Some syllabus or document[...]fell into the hands of Thomas Stevenson, producing yet another domestic earthquake” (Steuart, 1924, p.166, part 1), when Thomas discovered that his son had professed atheistic beliefs. It is not difficult to imagine, as well

as the sting of reproof from his father, the sense of emasculation Stevenson must have felt, as any man would, faced with the denial of the right to choose one's beliefs. To be expected is "a profound unconscious[...]antagonism of son towards father [...]" and, based on the observation of the geniality of his father towards others, "one of the seeds of *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* was the observation of the Janus face of Thomas Stevenson" (McLynn, 1994 p.64).

In his book *Queer Gothic* (2006), George Haggerty asks if Stevenson's novel reflects either "a fear of male love" or "the desire to escape from heteronormativity that male love offers." However, I would suggest that, while I agree that the novel reflects a desire to escape heteronormative constraints, it is possible, given Hyde's exclusion from Jekyll's social circle and Jekyll's own increasingly self-imposed exile, to view the novel's resistance to heteronormativity as a desire to dissolve boundaries of gender and sexuality altogether, and to allow for a fluid and unspecified sexuality. Viewed from this perspective, Stevenson's novel can be seen to reflect the needs of men *and* women in the late Victorian period who wished to escape their assigned gender roles. Beauvais (2009) suggests that Stevenson practically banishes female characters from his story, but continues her analysis in a manner which ignores the implications of the word 'banish' and implies instead a disregard of women in favour of a championing of the new bachelor figure. To do so ignores the fact that each female character in Stevenson's story, although anonymous and, on the face of it, passive and with no value, has the role of helping Hyde in some capacity. From the trampled child to Hyde's landlady, to the maid who is witness to Carew's murder, they are either assisting his progress or raising his profile within the story. In another sense, Jekyll's status is ambiguous due to the nature of his alter ego, while the status of both he and Hyde can be said to be ambiguous by their interdependent nature. It may be that Stevenson was expressing the idea that women, at the time of writing *Jekyll and Hyde*, were seen by society to be evolving beyond the requirements of their role. This in turn suggests a decision by Stevenson to identify the females in the novel only in their relation to men, not as reflection of his own views but to represent society at that time. Emily Hinnov (2012) reads Stevenson's novels in general as texts which reflect a "frightening projection of a kind of diseased femininity that he would rather repress and edit out of his art." Applied specifically to *Jekyll and Hyde*, Hinnov's reading suggests that Jekyll's rigid beliefs about his 'other' may be seen as resistance to the feminine within himself, and as resistance to women's entry

into male dominated areas, a feature of late Victorian culture which Stevenson's novel appears – on the surface – to actively resist. Hinnov also argues that Stevenson could be alluding to “the physical state of pregnancy[...],” with his reference to “bowels open,” and “a pang of nausea” in discussing the physical effects of concealing his life from his art. In Jekyll's confession, he talks of the agonised womb of consciousness, racking pangs and deadly nausea at the hour of birth, and finally subsiding agonies, being lighter in body and a solution of the bonds of obligation. These phrases are strongly suggestive of pregnancy, childbirth and parenthood. It is interesting to note, therefore, that Hinnov does not expand the analogy to that of Hyde as the progeny of Jekyll. Indeed, although Hyde is supposedly the unwanted side of Jekyll, the doctor talks about his dual natures in terms of a father/son relationship. Chakravorty Spivak (2006, p.108) suggests “the idea of a womb-envy as something that interacts with the idea of penis-envy” as an influence on human sexuality and society. From this perspective, it is possible to infer that Jekyll, and by extension Stevenson, far from wishing to suppress, or feeling hostile towards, the feminine side of his nature/art, identifies with the mother. Conversely, in casting himself as the parent who has given birth without the need of a mother, Jekyll can be associated with a multi-faceted interpretation of the Oedipus complex. Although his actions are ultimately counterproductive, Jekyll is motivated by the need to be rid of the conflict within him, thereby attempting to escape from his worst part, into wholeness.

Stevenson, Jekyll and Hyde all have experience of confinement. Stevenson, for most of his life, had been confined at times due to illness. For much of his childhood, he had “lived in a closed universe of invalidism, religious bigotry and night terrors; some have even described him as being in a cage” (McLynn, 1994, p.20). Jekyll was confined to his house for fear of his secret being discovered, once he lost control over the ability to return to his original form. Hyde was confined for years in the body of Jekyll, and later confined to one part of Jekyll's house, and confined to the fringes of society, both by Jekyll and by all those who judged and scorned him. Similarly, all three are orphans in one sense or another: Stevenson, referring to himself, once remarked that “the children of lovers are orphans” (McLynn, *ibid.*, p.68); Hyde, having no mother and being created for the purpose of exile, is an orphan; Jekyll makes no mention of his mother and, based upon the mention that Hyde has destroyed his father's portrait and the recollection of holding his father's hand as a boy, the implication is

that his father is dead. Hyde's rage is explicit, but as he is an integral part of Jekyll, it is evident that the doctor shares Hyde's rage. As the product of the author's dream, Hyde can also be said to symbolise Stevenson's rage.

If the link to the repressed feminine seems too tenuous, notwithstanding the issue of the butler's name, Freud explains that displacement is frequently at play in dreams where the thought is not represented directly in the dream. The dream is "centred differently," with its content structured around elements other than the dream-thoughts (1999, pp.232-233). Furthermore, the greatest intensity of the elements is determined by whichever of those require, for their formation, the most complex process of condensation (Freud, 1999, p.251). With that explanation to hand, the potentially least likely interpretation of a dream can become the most plausible. I would suggest that the repressed feminine, being further away in Stevenson's consciousness than his relationship with his father, would require the most complex process of condensation and therefore represents the greatest intensity of the elements within Stevenson's dream. Although I could not find any evidence that Stevenson read *Jane Eyre*, there is evidence of his reading material which suggests a possible connection to Brontë's novel. The UK Reading Experience Database (www.open.ac.uk) lists, as a text read by Stevenson, *The True Historical Narrative of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England*. One of the most prominent figures of that period was Edward Hyde, the 1st Earl of Clarendon, and son of Henry. One of Edward's sons, Lawrence, was the 1st Earl of Rochester. Edward was elected, in November 1640, as a member of the Long Parliament. Also elected at that time was Sir Alexander Carew. In isolating some of those names – Edward Hyde; Henry; Rochester; Carew – the connections with *Jekyll and Hyde* are tantalising. When two of those names are extracted – Edward Rochester – the gap between Stevenson's novella and *Jane Eyre* is narrowed. Given the lack of documented evidence that Stevenson had read Brontë's novel, to suggest that Stevenson's novel perhaps represents an unconscious empathy with women, via a hidden allusion to Charlotte Brontë's novel, leaves such a reading open to accusations of analytic parapraxis - a Freudian slip of a reading which reveals more about the critic than the text under scrutiny. However, for the purposes of writing my adaptation the *Jane Eyre* connection provided an artistically fruitful idea for the creation of a link between Jekyll's butler and Bertha Rochester's nurse. Poole is the butler in loyal service to his master for more than twenty years, just as *Jane Eyre*'s Grace

Poole was Bertha Mason's "public representative" (Gilbert and Gubar, 2000, p.350), and this was the inspiration behind my novel's link between *Jane Eyre's* Poole and *Jekyll and Hyde's* Poole. Margaret Atwood (2002, p. xxiii) states that "writing has to do with darkness, and a desire or perhaps a compulsion to enter it, and, with luck, to illuminate it, and to bring something back out to the light." Such a claim is pertinent in the context of exploring the silences and absences which constitute the darkness in *Jekyll and Hyde* in order to select certain themes and/or concepts for the purpose of adaptation. Furthermore, I would suggest that Stevenson's identification with, and reverence for, women are demonstrated by comments such as these in his letters to Mrs. Sitwell in February and April 1875: "I have such a longing for children of my own; and yet I do not think I could bear it if I had one. I fancy I must feel more like a woman than like a man about that"; "there is something more substantive about a woman than ever there can be about a man" (Stevenson, 2006, pp. 39; 42). I would suggest a final point which interrogates the claim that *Jekyll and Hyde* is a misogynistic tale. Carol Ohmann (2011, p.95) writes about the contemporary male critical reception of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. She tells us that both novels, written under 'ambiguous' pseudonyms, were assumed to be the work of, respectively, a male writer and, for one critic, a brother-and-sister team, of which the brother was the same writer of *Wuthering Heights*. Between publication and the discovery that the writers were female, what is evident is that "there is a considerable correlation between what readers assume or know the sex of the writer to be and what they actually see, or neglect to see, in 'his' or her work" (ibid., p.97). By applying this argument specifically to *Jekyll and Hyde* I want to suggest, therefore, that the tendency to label Stevenson's novel as misogynistic is misguided and based unfairly on the author's gender; had the writer been female, other explanations would be sought for the lack of prominent female characters in the story.

Stevenson's father thought that "literature was a pastime, not a serious occupation for a mature adult" (McLynn, 1994, p.68), and, although Thomas Stevenson could be said primarily to have infantilised his son, what he also did was *feminise* him. Gilbert and Gubar's book is of course built on the premise that women writers of the nineteenth century displayed a distinctly female imagination, in the context of "an overwhelmingly male-dominated society" (2000, p.xi), but other males, including sons, were also victims of that

society. My claim that Stevenson was feminised follows the thread of Gilbert and Gubar's argument (ibid., p.10) that "if a woman lacks generative literary power, then a man who loses or abuses such power becomes like a eunuch – or like a woman." Although Stevenson neither lost nor abused his generative literary powers, the patriarchal claim that writing literature was not a serious occupation for a mature adult represents the undermining of Stevenson's aspirations, therefore the *threat* of loss of generative literary power, and the implied criticism that Stevenson, in turning a pastime into a serious occupation, was abusing his generative literary power, and neglecting his male privilege to take advantage of the many serious occupations available to men. The most effective way, in the sense of the strategy that would cause the least damage to the relationship between father and son, to criticise the "male-dominated society" in which Stevenson lived and to criticise men like Thomas Stevenson and the cultural hegemony they perpetuated, was in fact to turn into a 'serious occupation' the pastime of which Stevenson was so fond. By pursuing his literary ambitions he proved wrong his father, and men like his father, and by writing a story that arguably constitutes a feminist allegory Stevenson symbolised those females who refused to be relegated to the attic rooms of the figurative mansion of both the literary tradition and Victorian society in general, instead entering the parlour to discourse with men as their legitimate partners, not as their submissive disciples or dutiful daughters. By creating the character of Jekyll/Hyde, Stevenson expresses his desire for self-knowledge, identifying with women in their "refusal of the self-destructiveness of male-dominated society" (Rich, 1980, p.35).

The question may be asked, then, that if Stevenson wished to critique the patriarchy, why did he not give the anonymous women in his story both names and agency? "Stevenson's own explanation was that he never included women in his work unless there was a chance that he could treat them realistically" (McLynn, 1994, p.263), but that explanation, particularly given his skills as a writer, has a facile ring to it. It is certainly true that "clearly in a sensational novel like this, there was a danger that he might have to deal with sexuality in a way unacceptable to a Victorian readership" (ibid.), and for this reason it is not difficult to surmise that the natural progression of this absence of content is to also omit names. However this still does not seem like the full story, particularly when minor characters such as Dr. Denman and Bradshaw have been given names, despite their insignificant roles within

the story, which was the inspiration behind my decision to accord them significant roles in my adaptation. Given that Denman's only role in the tale is to have died at some point in order to make available his house with its dissecting room, the reader may wonder why Stevenson bothered to name him, especially when there are women in the story who have a far more active role, yet remain anonymous. In the action of splitting and analysing this name (den man/cave man), I reasoned that Stevenson was perhaps suggesting that supposedly civilised men frequently reveal underlying savage natures. There is also the possibility that the name reflects the doctor always in his 'den,' the dissecting room. In Stevenson's novel, to name is to blame, which is pertinent in the light of my methodology, given that the work of dream condensation often selects words and names to represent things (Freud, 1999, p.227). Poole, Denman, Hyde and even Utterson have names which can be said to be representative, and which all carry the stain of guilt and secrecy. From this premise, Dr. Denman seemed an ideal ally with Sir Danvers Carew in his involvement in the events surrounding Henry's sister. Furthermore, it seemed appropriate to make Denman culpable to continue the gothic tone of *Jekyll and Hyde*, to heighten the "dynamic between image and effect," and to emphasise the symbolism of Jekyll's house as a "recognition that this is a place of secrets" (Williams, 1995, p.40). Furthermore, this aspect emphasises the viewpoint of certain Victorian male figures that "the girl, unlike the wife, was seen as highly sexualised – and at grave risk from this sexuality" (Reynolds & Humble, 1993, p. 15).

A possible explanation for the scarcity and anonymity of *Jekyll and Hyde's* female characters, again with an unconscious decision at its source, is that Stevenson was avoiding the act of possessing the female characters of his literary creation, abdicating his right to "assume patriarchal rights of ownership over the female characters" within his novel (Gilbert and Gubar, 2000, p.12). "Feminine sensibility, then, is by no means banished from *Jekyll and Hyde* but, significantly, what remains is[...]the *anima* kind; it is[...]the kind of woman that stands for assertive sexuality that is absent" (McLynn, 1994, p.265). This supports the idea that Stevenson was sensitive to the sensibilities of a Victorian readership, but it also suggests that he did not need to make any of the anonymous women sexually assertive, as the kind of woman that stands for assertive sexuality was already present in the form of Hyde, who even Jekyll acknowledges as his assertive, sexual side. Furthermore, just as female characters, such as witches, represent both the author's power to "allay their

anxieties by calling their source bad names” and simultaneously the endowment upon their character of the mysterious power to refuse to stay in their ordained place, thus generating “a story that gets away from its author,” so Hyde represents the “monster,” which “embodies intransigent female autonomy” (Gilbert and Gubar, 2000, p.28). Just as Freud recognises the female impulse as a dweller inside the house of every self and as gothic fiction problematizes the link between the female and her place within the patriarchal house, so *Jekyll and Hyde* demonstrates that the female, or female impulse, “must be kept as much as possible in the attic or the cellar – but she must be admitted” (Williams, 1995, p.248). This argument underlies the plot device in my adaptation which provides Jekyll with a wife, who must be admitted, and with a sister, who must be banished even further away than the attic or the cellar. In fact, reluctant admittance and banishment form the backbone of my story, with most, if not all, the characters having undergone some form of admittance or banishment to varying degrees, whether literally or metaphorically, at the hands of others or themselves. Similarly, while Hyde may destroy the father, he is pursued by a substitute parent in the form of Utterson, whose very name may be said to be the archetypal representative of patriarchy, for he is ‘utterly’ the son for whom Thomas Stevenson would have undoubtedly wished for. I would argue, therefore, that the anonymity of the female characters signifies Stevenson’s choice, conscious or otherwise, to reflect “man’s power – to dominate, tyrannize, choose, or reject the woman” (Rich, 1980, p.36).

Reynolds & Humble (1993, p.105) identify the most radical feature of the sensation novel as the “deconstruction of the ideal Victorian heroine” which decentres and undermines the Victorian female ideal of the “passive, blue-eyed, ringleted blonde” and “declares open season on the Angel in the House”. Therefore Stevenson’s portrayal of several examples of females *except* the Angel in the House represents a realistic counterpoint to the mythical figure of the ideal Victorian female, “whose halo cast a feeble but priceless ray of light upon a black and evil world of man’s making[...].” (Harrison, 1977, p.42). The story of *Jekyll and Hyde* includes a runaway child, a landlady with an “evil face, smoothed by hypocrisy”, a woman who approaches men to sell matches, a hysterical housemaid, a cook who runs towards Mr. Utterson “as if to take him in her arms” and a maid who, despite fainting after witnessing the murder of Carew, telephones the police and is able to provide a description

of the killer. Active women populate the outskirts of the story, but nowhere to be seen is the passive domestic angel. Although the novels of authors such as Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot and Louisa May Alcott indicate a “pervasive dissatisfaction with the culturally sanctioned ideal” (Reynolds & Humble, 1993, p.106), I would argue that *Jekyll and Hyde* is an example of the sensation novel’s impulse to represent “a radical expansion of the possibilities for female identity and behaviour” (Reynolds & Humble, 1993, p.106). In keeping with this, my adaptation subverts the convention of the “archetypal scenario for all those mildly thrilling romantic encounters between a scowling Byronic hero (who owns a gloomy mansion) and a trembling heroine” (Gilbert and Gubar, 2000, p.337). Jekyll, already a scowling Byronic hero with a gloomy mansion, is given a ‘heroine’ who is far from trembling but who enjoys reading Gothic tales which include romantic encounters between a Byronic hero and a trembling heroine. She possesses a “rebellious feminism” to match that of Jekyll/Hyde, who manages to escape, both from Jekyll and from patriarchy, whilst her husband was forced to remain inside his own patriarchal mansion (ibid., p.338). This idea is echoed in chapter eighteen, where Evangeline’s thoughts are of a sense of being “weighed down by one’s very self,” which seemed especially appropriate as it has parallels with Jekyll’s psyche in the sense of being unable to escape oneself.

To return to a fairy tale analogy, it is no coincidence that the transformation, and therefore the culmination of his internal conflict, of Jekyll into Hyde, which is the lethal catalyst which ends in the death of Jekyll, is witnessed in a “looking glass,” an identical trope to that in both *Snow White* and *Jane Eyre* (Gilbert and Gubar, 2000, p.36). Indeed, only the trope of the mirror is able to reflect what Hastie Lanyon, a “hide-bound pedant,” and established member of the patriarchy, could not bear to acknowledge. That Lanyon calls Jekyll’s professional aspirations “balderdash” has echoes of Thomas Stevenson’s disparaging remarks towards his son’s literary ambitions. No wonder, then, that his son went on to write a tale about someone who frequently looks in his mirror, “driven inward, obsessively studying self-images as if seeking a viable self.” Atwood (2002, p.98) states that “megomania and paranoia share the writer’s mirror” and it is also possible that Jekyll’s looking glass represents Stevenson’s conflicted image of himself, particularly with regard to his father’s disapproval of his profession. This obsessive search for the self “is necessitated by a state from which all outward prospects have been removed.” Just as the King has been

removed from the *Snow White* story, so the outward prospects have been removed – “or lost or dissolved away,” in *Jekyll and Hyde*, first by the absence of the father which is symbolised by the childhood recollections of Jekyll and by the mention of the portrait, and later by the destruction by Hyde of the portrait (Gilbert and Gubar, 2000, p.37).

It is well documented that Stevenson was, even for most of his adult life, dependent on his father for money (McLynn, 1994, p.65). He was forced to admit, after being rescued from near starvation, that “his living must continue to come from the pocket of his father” (Steuart, 1924, p.271, part 1). This aspect of the relationship between father and son is reflected in the way Hyde depends financially on Jekyll, and in the fact that even Hyde’s Soho quarters are furnished with things of Jekyll’s choosing. It may be argued that, as only one side of Jekyll, Hyde was not capable of independent action, yet Jekyll is adamant about Hyde’s autonomy with regards to the murder of Sir Danvers Carew. That Stevenson was humiliatingly dependent on his father is also reflected in the issue of the will, with Jekyll’s considerable fortune eventually being signed over to the far more deserving Utterson. However, Stevenson senior did not reserve his disapproval for the more serious matters of professional ambitions and religion. His disapproval seemed to pervade every aspect of his son’s life, and “Thomas was also angry that his son dressed in a slovenly or Bohemian way, especially when he appeared like a gypsy[...].” (McLynn, 1994, p.65). Even this detail is included in the disgust felt by everybody towards Hyde, whose “ill-fitting clothes” are criticised, and even laughed at, by everyone he meets. The Jekyll/Hyde persona symbolises the frustration and anxiety Stevenson felt towards a father whose inability to conceive of his son as a separate individual and whose “dominating, overprotective, intimidating, irritable, over-exacting” parenting style resulted in a son who developed “fundamentally contradictory attitudes toward others” (Horney, 1991, p.18-19). These contradictory attitudes can be seen in Stevenson’s conflicting loyalties and emotions towards not only his parents, but towards his childhood nurse, ‘Cummy’; his anxieties around religion and the supernatural; his ambivalence towards the city of Edinburgh and “countervailing” sexual impulses (McLynn, pp. 18; 29; 49; 51). It is not difficult to note the striking parallels between the experience of the author and that of his fictional protagonist, who demonstrates in a more extreme fashion the “alienation from self” (Horney, p.21) which leads to neurotic conflicts.

During the *fin-de-siècle* the word 'feminism' "first came into use as New Women...redefined the meanings of femininity and masculinity" (Showalter, 1992, p.3). This period was also a time of "cultural insecurity," which demanded "strict border controls around the definitions of gender" in order for men and women to "be fixed in their separate spheres" and thereby "preserve a comforting sense of identity and permanence" (Showalter, 1992, p. 4). As well as the few anonymous women in Stevenson's novel being distinctly separate from both men and the masculine vividness of the story itself and the male characters, most of whom are given names, the lives of Jekyll/Hyde are fixed in their separate spheres regarding living accommodation, social lives, temperament, physical appearance and culpability.

Nead (1988, pp.5-8) states that:

definitions of sexuality were fragmented[...]In general terms, female sexuality was organised around the dichotomy virgin/whore[...]the differences between the 'respectable' and the 'fallen' were defined...in an attempt to create clear moral boundaries and to prevent any possibility of confusion[...]the concept of 'respectability' [...]was a complex combination of moral, religious, economic and cultural systems.

Both Jekyll and Hyde arguably represent the 'respectable' and the 'fallen.' Jekyll is a well-respected and accomplished doctor but has some time ago fallen from grace with Dr. Lanyon, who views Jekyll as "wrong in the mind." He has also fallen short of his own ideals and standards, which is why he is trying to extract the less respectable part of himself. Hyde, on the other hand, has physically fallen from Jekyll's body and the reader knows he is a 'fallen' character by the way he behaves. But he also represents a 'fallen' woman in the sense that he is 'kept' in a separate establishment, furnished by Jekyll, who tries to keep his identity a secret even from his friends, one of whom is perturbed at the thought of Jekyll's estate being left to somebody who is only interested in his money. In the Victorian era "middle-class women were successfully pushing for greater access to rights and influence of all kinds" including "greater control over their own earnings and inheritances in marriage" and seeking "the right to leave a marriage with their own property" (Wolf, 2012, p.153). By asserting his right to have Jekyll's will signed over to him, after being forcibly ejected from his 'marriage' to Jekyll, Hyde represents the Victorian woman more than the Victorian man.

The nineteenth century "was the century of medicalized control of sexuality in general. The vagina was medicalized and controlled in highly specific ways in this era that were

unprecedented at the time” and “cultural forces sought to keep women ignorant of their anatomy and sexual responses and to develop a state of sexual ‘passionlessness’” (Wolf, 2012, p.151). There was a perception of female sexuality as “inclined to deviance and therefore in need of examination and regulation” (Reynolds & Humble, 1993, p.63) and a presumption, in both literary and medical representation, that “women’s interiors were more disorganised than men’s” (Cohen, 2009, p.8). I would suggest that the dynamic of Jekyll/Hyde is therefore more complex than first assumed. Here it is Jekyll, rather than Hyde, who represents the Victorian woman. He performs a self-inflicted medicalized control over the more ‘natural’ and aggressive part of himself, which symbolises sexuality. The fact that there is no mention of a romantic partner, alongside the implicit fact that he wishes to separate the sexual part of himself, represented by Hyde, indicates his wish to be ‘passionless,’ therefore ‘good’ in the eyes of society. In the sense that one can be passionate without the sexual element, the removal of vices, including passion, which Jekyll is so desperate to carry out, symbolises the removal of Stevenson’s aspirations towards writing, something about which he was passionate.

During the Victorian period a middle-class woman’s sexual and reproductive health transferred from the hands of midwives to those of male doctors whose “model of dealing with the vagina and uterus was...one of ‘heroic medicine,’ or impatient, sometimes violent, intervention” (Wolf, 2012, p.155). It can be argued that in this context Jekyll again represents a complex composite character; he symbolises both the medical profession, with supposedly heroic motives, enforcing violent intervention against Hyde, and the female subject deemed to have something ‘wayward’ inside them. Dr Isaac Baker Brown introduced cliterodectomy to England in 1858 and continued to practise the operation for the next ten years and “became famous and sought after for his ‘cure,’ which took argumentative, fiery girls, and, after he had excised their clitorises, returned them to their families in a state of docility, meekness, and obedience” (Wolf, 2012, p.157). Jekyll again represents both victim and perpetrator, being the interventionist medical figure, like Dr Baker Brown, and the object of an extreme extraction method with the aim of producing a more sterile, docile, meek and obedient version of himself.

Wolf (2012, pp. 160-162) states that:

In 1857, the first Contagious Diseases Act[...]in England[...]gave the state the power to round up any woman suspected of being a prostitute, and forcibly incarcerate her[...]The terror of this situation[...]has deeply imprinted Anglo-American female consciousness[...]That if we were to 'admit' sexual agency at all in our pasts, in the context of a rape inquiry[...]public shaming will follow[...]we still feel somehow that to be open about our sexual wishes or agency is somehow to court catastrophe.

Hyde represents the wild side of Jekyll and the textual evidence in Stevenson's novel strongly suggests that Hyde engages in 'dubious' sexual activity. Before his experiment, Jekyll has 'incarcerated' his wild side, albeit that he has engaged in some of this behaviour in his past, according to his friend Gabriel Utterson. It is interesting to note, then, that it is Hyde who becomes the more dominant character, with Jekyll incarcerated with increasing frequency inside his own home. This is synonymous with recognition of the feminist impulse, recognised as such by the 1880s and borne in part from the shock and anger in reaction to the Contagious Diseases Acts (Reynolds & Humble, 1993, p.38).

Both female and male Victorians "sought to create counter narratives to the toxic, medicalized vagina," with Victorian women still seeking out representations of female sexuality and the vagina. Throughout the classic women's novels of the time, "alluring holes, beautiful boxes, and valuable treasure chests appear with clearly suggestive implications," via metaphor and allegory, an aspect which also appears in some works of art of the time. For instance, Rossetti "often painted botanically incorrect, but anatomically correct, labial and vaginal pomegranates" (Wolf, 2012, pp. 163-165). To add to my earlier statement that Stevenson's novel appears *on the surface* to symbolise resistance against the feminine, in the context of my stated interpretations thus far the novel could be said to represent, following a more in-depth analysis, an allegory *warning against* resistance to the feminine. This is why Stevenson kills off both Hyde *and* Jekyll; if one kills off the feminine, one denies a fact of nature and a facet of oneself, therefore killing one's own essence. McLynn (1994, p.260) identifies "the key idea in *Jekyll and Hyde*: that you cannot drain evil out of a personality and leave just the good, since the two are inextricably mixed" and similarly, you cannot drain the feminine impulse and leave the masculine impulse, since those two also are inextricably linked. This was the basis for my portrayal of Evangeline, whose attitudes and appearance stand in opposition to the rigid and monochromatic nature of Jekyll and

who echoes the female protagonists of sensation fiction, which “moves its female characters outside the narrow confines of the domestic sphere, into a more dangerous, morally fluid public realm” (Reynolds & Humble, 1993, p.122). Evangeline’s synaesthesia metaphorically suggests her ability to perceive things in many shades, as opposed to Henry’s rigid perspective. Her red hair situates her in a tradition of dangerous sexuality and unconventionality, a view challenged by the pre-Raphaelite artists in using red-haired models such as Elizabeth Siddal, and also foreshadows the poisoning of Henry, echoing such fictional anti-heroines as Lydia Gwilt, the red-haired villainess of Wilkie Collins’ *Armada* (1866).

Freud (1999, pp. 224-225) tells us that a collective figure can be created for the dream, by combining the features “of two or more persons into a dream-image.” In fact, collective and composite figures feature as “one of the main methods of condensation in dreams” (ibid.). I would suggest, continuing the argument that the process of condensation, when dreaming, produces composite figures which represent the identity of two or more people, that there exists in Hyde a female figure much more familiar to Stevenson. McLynn (1994, p.257) notes that it is “more than a little interesting that Stevenson often dwells at length on her ‘gypsy’ pigmentation; a description of his wife in May 1885 sounds like something from one of his dreams: ‘There came here a lean, Brown, bloodshot woman, claiming to be Fanny.’” This description is reminiscent of Hyde, who is frequently described as dark and swarthy. Steuart (1924, p.186, part 1) also notes that “Mrs. Osbourne was [...]small, square, and compact of figure, with black hair and dusky complexion of what may roughly be called the gipsy type. Her eyes too were dark and at least as ready to flash in anger as melt in pity.” The impulse towards censorship can mean that an alternative person is substituted in the dream, a second person who has only partial connections with the offensive material. At this point a composite figure is formed with “unimportant” features from the first and second person (Freud, 1999, p.245). If we apply this theory to Stevenson’s dream, it may be supposed that Hyde bears some physical features from Fanny Osbourne. This idea is further supported by Freud’s concept of wish-fulfilment, the realisation of which stems not from the life of the day, but from what has been suppressed and only stirs at night. In fact, “the wishful impulse [...] is not capable of going beyond the borders of the unconscious system at all” (ibid., p.361). Freud goes further and adds that what is favoured by the unconscious are those

impressions and ideas which have either been ignored or rejected as unimportant (ibid., p.367). I would therefore reiterate that the most pertinent element of Stevenson's dream, and therefore his story, is the repressed feminine instinct. Hyde is portrayed as a deviant person who is 'owned' by a man who is desperate for their identities to remain undiscovered, and who in turn is desperate for both liberty and autonomy. But the character of Henry complicates the subversion somewhat: he, rather than Hyde, is the one suffering from mental health problems, he is plagued by internal demons, and he ultimately suffers a deliberate and violent death. This line of argument suggests that, rather than representing late Victorian novels of 'homosociality', Stevenson's novel is subverting the trend in order to mimic the thwarted and doomed female of the literary tradition to emphasise the thwarted and doomed female, and therefore feminine instinct, of late Victorian society. Fiction which "featured male trios and duos acting as collective heroes enjoyed great popularity" during the late 1880s and 90s (Harrison, 1977, p.129), yet *Jekyll and Hyde's* emphasis, far from portraying any of its male characters as heroes, is on the isolation, debasement and secrecy of its main protagonist. Utterson, Lanyon and Jekyll once formed a trio of "inseparable friends," with Utterson remaining Jekyll's closest companion, someone in whom Jekyll has "so great a trust." However, Jekyll reveals the truth behind his secrecy to Lanyon only to prove the former's superior scientific prowess, and to Utterson only after his death. Far from being a misogynistic text, and one which celebrates male solidarity, *Jekyll and Hyde* subverts the notion of male superiority and strength. This suggests that Stevenson wrote his novella, as many writers do, "to paint a portrait of society and its ills" (Atwood (2002, pp. xv-xxi).

Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1985) notes that in contrast to the Gothic hero who personifies the concerns of an entire genre the bachelor represents a restricted and marginalised figure. In this sense, it may be argued that part of Stevenson's motivation was to highlight the stress placed upon the nineteenth-century division of female and male space, particularly among the middle classes. From this viewpoint the battle between the Gothic hero and the bachelor can be identified in the juxtaposition of violence and refined manners; activity and introspection; virility and impotence. Jekyll and Hyde can therefore be argued as characters which represent a battle of the sexes. But the representational gender of either character is fluid throughout the story, something which pre-empts the work of critics such as Hélène

Cixous in *Sorties* (2000), where she argues that the representations, images and myths around the cultural determinations within society result in a deformed perception of the imaginary order and therefore deny the possibility of any definition of either gender. If we accept this premise, Jekyll's decision to rid himself of his feminine impulse, personified in the uncivilised, ungentlemanly form of Hyde, may be said to represent a desire to be more definitively masculine. However, this desire is a result of what Cixous identified as the product of a culture which "depends upon a 'violent hierarchy' of binary codes" (Allen, 2000, p.152), and which disguises a deeper need for both the masculine and feminine impulses to be reconciled, hence the grotesque transformation into Hyde, a symbolic representation of the association between women, the body and madness. The psychoanalyst Alfred Adler's definition of psychological activity is "a complex of aggressive and defensive mechanisms whose final purpose is to guarantee the continued existence of the organism and to enable it to develop in safety," and which can only be imagined in relation to its environment, "responding to stimuli from outside" (1998, p.14). When applied to Jekyll it may be argued that his radical decision to split himself can be understood as a rational choice to ensure his safe passage through life in a patriarchal and rigid society. Adler's definition can further be applied to Stevenson, both as an author whose 'shilling shocker' legitimised his social and financial standing, and as a male writer who, *at face value*, either marginalised the female characters in his story, or cast them in an unfavourable light in order to embed certain codes and symbols. Implicit in the story of Jekyll and Hyde is Stevenson's suggestion that the doctor's apparently extreme thinking is, on closer inspection, the inevitable outcome of a conflict when "on the one hand the demands of the organism must find fulfilment and on the other the demands of human society must be satisfied" (ibid., p.235). When those demands mean that everyone is "judged according to the criteria of the privileged male" (ibid., p.105), it is easy to see why Jekyll feels compelled to conduct himself within the constraints of a society which valued, at least outwardly, "a life of effort, value and control" and why the "imperious desire to carry my head high" outweighed, in terms of social approval, any pleasures for Jekyll "when I laid aside restraint" (ibid.) Jekyll represents the extreme incarnation of the stereotypical man who feels pressured to conform to societal expectations of masculinity which include "devotion to duty; the winning of all manner of victories[...]; the acquisition of positions, honours and titles; resistance against so called feminist tendencies; and so on" (ibid.),

evidenced by his privileged upbringing, his professional qualifications and esteemed reputation, and his dedication to “the furtherance of knowledge or the relief of sorrow and suffering.” Karen Horney (1991, p.22) makes the point that Stevenson’s story of the physical separation of the conflicting sides of Jekyll’s personality corresponds to the reality of “contradictory trends” which become “so isolated in the person’s mind that they no longer constitute disturbing conflicts.” To expand on Horney’s reference to the story, the situation is complicated by Jekyll’s morbid dependency on Hyde. Despite the fact that Hyde means, for Jekyll, the death of ‘a thousand interests and aspirations’ and guarantees the prospect of a ‘despised and friendless’ life, Jekyll ‘had more than a father’s interest’ and admits that he ‘neither gave up the house in Soho, nor destroyed the clothes of Edward Hyde.’ Although he ‘bade a resolute farewell’ to Hyde after the murder of Danvers Carew, only two months pass before he is ‘tortured with throes and longings’ and once again swallows the transforming draught. Horney (p.240) identifies the drive behind morbid dependency as the desire “to merge with another being, to become one heart and one flesh, and in this merger to find a unity which he cannot find in himself.” Although this seems to contradict Jekyll’s desire for a split, the longing for surrender and for unity which defines morbid dependency can be identified in Jekyll’s desperation to resume his life as Hyde, a man who “seemed more express and single” than Jekyll’s own “imperfect and divided countenance,” and in whose guise Jekyll could “spring headlong into the sea of liberty.” That Jekyll could bemoan “this incoherency of my life” indicates his longing for psychological unity, “one of the strongest motivating forces in human beings and [...] even more important to the neurotic, with his inner division” (Horney, p.240). In a relationship defined by morbid dependency “the dependent partner is in danger of destroying himself, slowly and painfully” (ibid., p. 243) and Stevenson’s story is one which chronicles Jekyll’s self-inflicted and protracted destruction of his body and mind in an attempt to rid his life of internal conflict. Horney emphasises that morbid dependency “is an *outcome* of many other factors and not their root” (p. 258), therefore to utilise the premise of a repressed feminine impulse within Jekyll as an underlying factor which contributes to his eventual demise, thanks to the very psychological outlet he sought, correlates with a recognisable behavioural pattern. The unconscious feminine impulse detected in Stevenson’s story is the likely reason that, contrary to Harold Bloom’s suggestion, I did not feel “the exhaustions of being a latecomer”, symptomatic of the anxiety of influence (1997, p.12). It may be argued that writing an

adaptation suggests confronting head-on the anxiety of influence of the adaptive text, and by association the author, given that “we always feel its presence shadowing the one we are experiencing directly” (Hutcheon, 2013, p.6). However, there is a counter-argument to suggest that the greater difficulty for some authors in writing an adaptation is not the psychological weight of another author’s spectral shadow looming over them, but the demands of the life of “a female human being trying to fulfil traditional female functions in a traditional way[...]in direct conflict with the subversive function of the imagination” (Rich, 1980, p.43).

Freud states that “the exploration of a work of literature must be undertaken afresh by each reader and involves an element of (perhaps unwitting) self-exploration” (1999, p. xxxv). The huge body of work which constitutes the critical analysis of the story, as well as the fictional revisions of Stevenson’s original, are testament to the fact that so many readers do in fact undertake afresh a reading of *Jekyll and Hyde*. Adaptations such as my own and those of Jean Rhys and Sophie Gee point to the impact upon our readings, and subsequent revisions, of certain novels by movements in “the theoretical and intellectual arena” and are produced as much, if not more so, by issues such as feminist ideology, “as by the literary canon *per se*” (Sanders, 2006, p.13). What the numerous adaptations of *Jekyll and Hyde* demonstrate is that the fictional characters of Henry Jekyll and Edward Hyde present to the reader personalities and identities which symbolise complex social debates (see Appendix for a list of literary adaptations). In his book *The Art of Fiction* (1991, p.14), John Gardner states that “the primary subject of fiction is and has always been human emotion, values and beliefs,” and the story of *Jekyll and Hyde*, although it is a sensation novel featuring an arguably outrageous plot, has at its heart a message about the complexities and consequences of emotion, values and beliefs. Its “narrative also contains potential symbolic features that comment on inner conflicts and psychic struggles in general” (Ostrom et al, 2001, p.415), therefore the story can be adapted for an arguably limitless number of scenarios, which is the reason that so many and such a variety of adaptations can exist with equal success and plausibility.

Brian Rose identifies four main areas of interest in adaptations of *Jekyll and Hyde*, which can be identified as ongoing: the function of the female; the typology of evil; the depiction of Hyde as a symbol of evil and the role of science (1996, p.7). I would suggest that although

the myriad adaptations seem to privilege certain elements over others, a commonality is evident in that many interpretations create additional characters which represent the silenced impulses of Henry Jekyll. Noble (1983, p.61) states that the indeterminacy of “Jekyll’s previous misdemeanours and Hyde’s undescribed outrages” is what gives the tale its potency and to be given specific details would mean that “the story would lose the chief pleasure it offers the reader: its endless power of suggestion.” This endless power of suggestion also constitutes a rich seam which can be mined when undertaking an adaptation of the story. I would argue that writing an adaptation involves the same process as that involved in writing ‘original’ fiction, since “at heart all fiction treats, directly or indirectly, the same thing: our love for people and the world, our aspirations and fears” (Gardner, 1991, p.42). The writer of an adaptation, therefore, identifies in the source text characters or themes he or she cares about and/or something which threatens that which he or she cares about. This in turn accounts for the apparently endless ways in which a story such as *Jekyll and Hyde* can be adapted.

According to Sharon Packer (2015, p.51), the critics’ favourite film adaptation of Stevenson’s story is the 1931 version starring Fredric March as the good doctor who “does not intend to transform into an uncouth apelike rapist.” This adaptation’s portrayal of women parallels the dichotomous nature of Stevenson’s story by introducing the opposing female characters of Jekyll’s fiancée, Muriel Carew, and a prostitute, Ivy Pierson, who is terrorised by Hyde. Heidi Kaye (2015, p.242) notes that the 1920 film starring John Barrymore does not include “the popular Freudian notion of Hyde embodying youth’s repressed sexual appetite,” as the later Fredric March version would. Pairing Jekyll with a female companion is a common feature of *Jekyll and Hyde* adaptations, one of the first of which was a stage performance which opened in Boston, USA on 9th May 1887 and added the female roles of Mrs. Lanyon and Agnes Carew, Sir Danvers Carew’s daughter and Jekyll’s fiancée. Jekyll’s fiancée is the daughter of Carew in many retellings and occasionally, as in the case of a short film in 1920, she is the daughter of Dr. Lanyon. The link between Jekyll and Carew, via the former’s engagement to Carew’s daughter, has proved a popular plot device and was included in *Jekyll and Hyde: The Musical*, first presented in Houston, Texas in 1990. Katherine Linehan (2003, p.151) asks if, given “that Jekyll is repeatedly given a love involvement”, the inclusion of sex does damage to the author’s original intentions or makes explicit “an aspect of the

story Stevenson was forced to mute in deference to Victorian propriety". I would suggest that, far from distorting authorial intent, those who adapt the story are taking their cue from Stevenson's many hints at Jekyll's pre-existing proclivities, including Utterson's recollection that Henry 'was wild when he was young'. With the exception of notable examples such as *Jacqueline Hyde* (1996) by the children's author Robert Swindells, most adaptations which include female protagonists either portray these characters as passive, hapless victims, or else they use them as direct substitutions for the original male characters. That a love interest would have to be either a villain or a victim was the likely reason that Stevenson, responding to the fact that the stage version of his story featured a 'sweetheart' of Jekyll's, said "I thought of that, but I couldn't do it; it was too horrible" (Stevenson quoted in Terry, 1996, p.140). A play written by Anna Bird Stewart (1915) is apparently the first example of a re-working in which both protagonists are female, although Gilbert Patten's 1892 adaptation *Double-voiced Dan, the Always-on-Deck Detective, or, the Female Jekyll and Hyde: A Weird Mystery of the Great Metropolis* appears to be the first adaptation which features a female character. Swindells' adaptation, which reinforces Rose's argument, is an example of how far outside the boundaries an author can depart from a tracer text by reshaping culturally familiar metaphors. It tells the story of a troubled school-age girl who is recounting to her psychiatrist the circumstances leading up to her setting fire to her school, thereby demonstrating the potent adaptive capabilities of Stevenson's story as one whose motifs transcend age, class and gender. Another adaptation which demonstrates the malleability of the original story is *Drag Thing* (2007) by Victor J. Banis, which features two female scientists and lesbian lovers, Melissa Hyde and Janet Jackle, who work for a pharmaceutical company. They are working on a formula they call 'Alley Thing,' intended to "make women physically stronger than men" in order to liberate them from "the prison of male physical dominance" so that "no man will ever again dare try to force himself upon a woman." Peter Warren is employed as a janitor at the company and one night accidentally swallows some of the 'Alley Thing' which turns him into an eight-foot-tall drag queen. What is articulated in these texts and my own is that, when writing an adaption "decisions are made in a creative as well as an interpretive context that is ideological, social, historical, cultural, personal and aesthetic" (Hutcheon, 2013, p.107).

Many critics argue that feminist, postmodernist and postcolonial approaches towards adaptations “are reworked in contradictory ways that demonstrate the concerns and invested interests of those who are reworking them” (Shachar, 2012, p.147). Rousselot (2014, p.5) argues that the current reading appetite for “consuming post-historical periods is a way of dealing with modern-day concerns” and I would suggest that adaptations are a genre in which this process of dealing with contemporary issues is intensified. I would add that in identifying the concerns of the present day in the context of the past, the reader’s perception of modern-day concerns is heightened. Renata Kobetts Miller (2005) argues that three late twentieth-century writers of *Jekyll and Hyde* adaptations were motivated by concerns of class and gender politics. She identifies the texts of the novelists Emma Tennant and Valerie Martin and the playwright David Edgar as reactions against the tradition of reinterpretations to explore the similarities between our time and the late 1800s. Although Martin’s novel and Edgar’s play have a Victorian setting, as opposed to Tennant’s 1980s setting, Miller identifies all three texts as neo-Victorian in their impulse to engage with Stevenson’s story as a source text for adaptations which represent the same contemporary concerns. Both Martin and Tennant portray these concerns through female protagonists, with Martin’s *Mary Reilly* (1990) narrating the story from the viewpoint of a maid in Jekyll’s household and Tennant’s *Two Women of London: The Strange Case of Ms Jekyll and Mrs Hyde* (1989) transposing the roles of Jekyll and Hyde to that of an impoverished single mother. Incidentally, Tennant also wrote *The Bad Sister* (1978), a reworking of James Hogg’s *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), a novel which many critics claim to be the inspiration for *Jekyll and Hyde*.

Mitchell (2010, p.3) suggests that neo-Victorian fiction addresses the needs or “speaks to the desires of particular groups now” and in this genre there can be identified an “interrogative mode” (Shachar, 20120, p.180). For example, the character of Evangeline in my adaptation is partly autobiographical; to use Margaret Atwood’s argument, some of Evangeline’s behaviour can be explained by the desire “to justify my own view of myself” (2002, pp.xv-xxi).Tennant’s novel, while not neo-Victorian in style, draws a parallel between the pressure felt by Henry Jekyll to conform to societal expectations in the late 1880s and “how the frequently intolerable pressures for one woman today – single parenthood, need to compete in the marketplace, a Manichean split between ambition and ‘caring’ – can lead

to disintegration and murder” (Tennant, 2011, p.vi). Just as Henry Jekyll suppresses his less respectable side in order to further his professional and social standing, so “Eliza Jekyll gains career and social success by conforming to gender role expectations” (Miller, 2005, p.68). Although many single mothers will identify strongly with Tennant’s motivation behind her adaptation of *Jekyll and Hyde*, the foremost concern when writing my adaptation was primarily to address women in general but also those who feel under pressure to conform to societal expectations, whether in general or with regards to gender. Gardner (1991, p.61) states that a writer’s “first job is to authenticate the story’s *primary* meaning” to suggest its “larger, *secondary* meaning[...]” and the main aim when writing my adaptation was to express the view that when one gender is oppressed by society, it follows that this oppression will harm all of society. This perspective is shown mainly through the characters of Evangeline, Henry, Arturo and Fergus and Sofia Gunn, each of whom exhibit a desire and/or capability to defy societal expectations. To a lesser extent are also addressed the needs of those who feel disempowered by class hierarchy, such as Hope and Bradshaw. A comparison of my adaptation with those of Tennant and Martin, and alongside Stevenson’s story, supports Hutcheon’s argument that “adaptation[...]is not a copy in any mode of reproduction, mechanical or otherwise[...]” and “involves both memory and change, persistence and variation” (2013, p.173). Furthermore, I would suggest that my novel, with its representations of both sexual pleasure and repression, shares some common ground with both *Mary Reilly* and Margaret Atwood’s *Alias Grace* (1996), both of which focus on “the ramifications of the Victorian systems of class, gender and sexuality” (Saxey, 2009, p.80). By using Stevenson’s novel as a basis for my own, and adopting his characters for the purpose of illustrating my interpretations, I am implicitly elevating the status of reader to that as the foremost agent in the process of producing fictional literature. This action appears to endorse Roland Barthes’ argument, in his essay ‘The Death of the Author,’ that “writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin[...]starting with the very identity of the body writing” (1977, p.142). However, by revealing that the character of Evangeline is a mixture of me as I am and me as I would like to be, I am reinstating the authorial control and therefore simultaneously opposing Barthes’ theory.

There are various ways in which writers of contemporary historical fictions “examine which aspects of that past they choose to memorialise” (Mitchell, 2010. p.6) and my focus is on the rigid social conventions of late Victorian society with regards to gender expectations in order to suggest that these issues still exist. Mitchell, (2010, p.7) argues that neo-Victorian fiction demonstrates a “contemporary scepticism about our ability to know the past with a strong sense of the past’s inherence in the present” and I would suggest that this thread can be identified in my novel. The story’s scepticism can be demonstrated by the implicit questioning of the prevalence of the ‘Angel in the House’ myth and the issues around sexuality and freedom of expression. For example, both Evangeline and her mother are the antithesis of domestic purity and servility so fondly espoused in Coventry’s Patmore’s famous narrative poem, yet that traces of this ideal of womanhood still exist can be seen in such issues as the gender pay gap. Another example which suggests scepticism about our knowledge of this particular time in history is Evangeline’s reference to Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, a woman who arguably could not have been further away from Patmore’s notion of an ideal wife and whose father was determined for his daughter to have the same opportunities as a man. This inclusion demonstrates the “recovery of women’s history” and suggests the potential of historical novels to produce “meaningful accounts of past actuality” (Mitchell, 2010, p.27). I would add that adaptations of historical novels may more potently demonstrate the recovery of a specific history and produce more meaningful accounts of this history because the reader is encouraged to re-evaluate both the original story and the original context. In this way “the cultivation of nostalgia” is encouraged, which neo-Victorian fiction engages with as “a potentially more subversive approach to historical recollection” (Mitchell, 2010, p.179). For example, just as Michel Foucault’s famous repressive hypothesis drew attention to the fact that “Victorian culture was less homogenous and more diverse than it had previously seemed” (Mitchell, 2010, p.47), my novel encourages the reader to think that some wives would have enjoyed marital sex, as Evangeline does, contrary to the sexual naivety required by commentators such as William Cobbett, whose guidelines in *Advice to Young Men and (Incidentally) Young Women* (1830) included the suggestion that “she ought not to appear to understand” indecorum, displaying instead “chastity, perfect modesty” (Cobbett quoted in Reynolds & Humble, 1993, p.11). Similarly, my novel also suggests that some parents were much more liberal than supposed, as are Fergus and Sofia Gunn, and that sometimes ‘good’ girls did ‘bad’ things. Furthermore,

and thinking of the example of *Wide Sargasso Sea* which interrogates the notion of an affection for the past, despite one critic's insistence that "the element of nostalgia, of love of the past, of conservatism, clearly cannot be excluded" (Gutleben, 2013, p.41), I would argue that neo-Victorian fiction can also articulate the exact opposite. What an adaptation of a Victorian text may also do is to conjure a thrilling horror in the reader, a revulsion at the indignities or injustices inflicted upon certain sections of society in the nineteenth century, a compulsion to vicariously feel those sufferings and also either a relieved gratitude that they do not live in such an unenlightened time or an outraged lament that things are changing too slowly. In a more positive vein, the reader may also simultaneously enjoy "an imaginative escape into a new and unfamiliar exotic space and time, posited outside of everyday experience" (Scott, 2014, p.69).

My novel is a nod to Victorian gothic and sensation fiction, each of which are associated with "women as readers, writers and characters" and which are "linked to the representation of transgressive women" (Mitchell, 2010, p.118). My adaptation is linked to gothic and sensation fiction on a dual level; as the author of a re-worked story, I am both the female reader and the female re-writer, and Evangeline represents a female reader and character. Furthermore, the connection is deepened by the fact that Evangeline represents a sexual woman and a transgressive one who troubles the notion of a heroine. The transgression is heightened with a more explicit portrayal of sexuality than that found in Victorian gothic and sensation fiction. The depiction of sexuality in some of Sarah Waters' neo-Victorian novels demonstrates the pleasure derived from the surprise and contrast of a plot of suppression and liberation, via the reinforcement of the "Victorian carapace of sexual repression[...]so that its underbelly can be exposed" (Saxey, 2009, p.59). However, it can also be argued that neo-Victorian fiction does not represent scepticism about our ability to know the past but instead offers a more overt expression of a different scepticism which began with Victorian fiction itself. The literary representations of marriages within Victorian novels suggest that the ideal of the pure wife was being called into question and by the end of the nineteenth century the rebellious female figure was celebrated. Reynolds & Humble (1993, p. 18; 40) cite the examples of George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871), Hardy's *Jude the Obscure* and Grant Allen's *The Woman Who Did* (both 1895) as a suggestion that "the officially approved nineteenth-century woman had become a monster" and that some

Victorian fiction “posed a significant and overt challenge to the notion that marriage should be the goal of a woman’s life.” Similarly, Gillian Beer identifies in *Middlemarch* an interrogation of “bringing into question any easy definitions of ‘the nature of women’” (1986, p.190). However, neo-Victorian fiction differs significantly from Victorian fiction in that an active female sexuality is both overtly expressed and frequently rewarded, unlike its predecessor, in which there would be “a symbolic retribution” (Reynolds & Humble, 1993, p.46), which can be identified in *Jekyll and Hyde* in the connection between Hyde’s innate evil and his libidinous tendencies. The fact that Jekyll perceives the solution to controlling his sexuality to be a split between his good and bad sides is indicative of the “Victorian notions of female sexuality, that sees the female ideal as ‘naturally’ sexless, and the fallen woman as ‘naturally’ libidinous” (Reynolds & Humble, 1993, p.49). Related to this concept, the ‘H/E’ title of my adaptation reflects the equal representation between Henry, Edward and Evangeline, and therefore the feminine and masculine side of man. A further intention is to interrogate the representative ‘he’ of the novelistic tradition, particularly that of the Victorian novel, which “signifies and carries through the action of the novel” and “represents an unquestioned convention” (Barthes, 1984, p.30-1). In separating the two letters of the title, Jekyll’s physical split is emphasised but also suggested is the status granted to Evangeline as equal signifier and protagonist, despite her gender.

Although on one level *Jekyll and Hyde* may be seen as a straightforward tale of the internal conflict between good and evil, Stevenson’s shilling shocker is a highly subversive version of the classic fictional trope of a hero slaying the monster. I wanted to emulate this subversion by adding an extra layer of recognition/shock to the archetypal pattern which follows the path of the monster’s dark power being overthrown and the hero emerging to enjoy the prize (Booker, 2004, p.48-9). Just as Jekyll acts as both the slain monster and the conquering hero, and can therefore never enjoy the hero status or claim the prize, so Evangeline sees her own dreams shattered and is the agent of destruction of the man she once thought of as her hero. She is a heroine to some extent, as she simultaneously ends Hyde’s reign of terror and saves Jekyll from either the asylum or imprisonment, but the classic treatment of good versus evil is absent. This complex representation, as opposed to the more simplified typology of evil, is also extended to the character of Hyde, despite Jekyll’s unequivocal judgement that Hyde is ‘pure evil,’ a statement which reflects a Victorian tendency towards

“categories of ‘pure and ‘impure,’ and sex into ‘licit’ and ‘illicit’” (Reynolds & Humble, 1993, p.6). Furthermore, the intention to express what motivates Hyde to commit the murder of Danvers Carew, can be explained by an authorial desire “to produce order out of chaos” (Atwood 2002, pp. xv-xxi). Robert Bridge’s unusual adaptation of *Jekyll and Hyde* included in his book *Overheard in Arcady* (1894) dramatizes an interaction between Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde and makes explicit the dialogue between the two as if they are separate characters. This separation of the two sides of Jekyll is also adopted by Susan Sontag in her 1974 short story ‘Doctor Jekyll,’ viewed by one critic as a strategy to better identify them later as aspects of the same person, because the author “understood the dangerous liaison between vice and virtue” (Harding, 2007). Daniel Levine’s *Hyde* (2014) narrates the story from the first-person perspective of Edward Hyde and is arguably, of all the adaptations, the most sympathetic towards Hyde and the most interrogative of the nature of inherent wickedness ascribed to Hyde. Levine deals with the typology of evil as a more complex issue than is represented by Stevenson, identifying Hyde as a victim of an abusive father and thus a more complex mix of ‘good’ and ‘evil’ than is assumed from any existing knowledge of Hyde. What Levine’s and my own adaptation share is the extended plot treatment of the trampled girl in the original story. While Levine’s adaptation revisits the *girl* as a significant character in her adulthood, and mine revisits the *event*, both adaptations highlight the hypocrisy of a society which sexualises young girls and infantilises adult women, and both adaptations interrogate the rigid dichotomy of good versus evil. Related to that is the idea of evil as a genetic predisposition and something which is hereditary. My novel has some common ground in this area with several adaptations. A short story written in 1962 by Ray Russell, published in *Playboy* magazine, details the adventures of Hyde’s son, and in 2015 an ITV production, set in the 1930s, featured Robert Jekyll as the grandson of a woman who became pregnant with the child of Jekyll/Hyde. It was prematurely axed, despite the show’s creator Charlie Higson promising “some great stories lined up for series 2”, “following disappointing viewing figures and controversy over its graphic scenes” (Jackson, 2016). Robert Bloch and Andre Norton’s *The Jekyll Legacy* (1990) is a sequel told from the perspective of Hester Lane, Jekyll’s niece. Unlike these adaptations, my intention was to suggest the possibility of an heir but not make Jekyll/Hyde’s offspring the focus of the adaptation; hence the novel’s ambiguous ending and an implicit question which focuses on the ongoing debate around nature or nurture: which father has had the strongest genetic

influence upon the child, and will the child's environment and upbringing have a measurable influence? As Stiles (2012, p.190) suggests, today's society is concerned, just as it was in the late nineteenth century, with biological determinism and this may help to explain why *Jekyll and Hyde* "remains enormously popular and culturally influential."

Neo-Victorian fiction sometimes takes the form of a prequel, sequel or parallel narrative which explores "tangential, marginal or background events and/or characters" (Mitchell 2010, p.2). My novel employs, to varying degrees, all three narrative forms to explore various marginal events suggested by Stevenson's story, such as the family backgrounds of Poole and Bradshaw, insights into Jekyll's adolescent years, sexuality and female characters, offering a revised perspective by adding hypothetical motivation and "voicing the silenced and marginalised" (Sanders, 2006, pp.18-19). Thus my adaptation is a "purposeful reassembly of *fragments* to form a new whole," rather than a straightforward adaptation with no original elements (Sanders, 2006, p.4). There seems to be a certain defensiveness around neo-Victorian novels, with critics pre-empting accusations that these fictions are "playing nineteenth-century dress-ups" (Mitchell, 2010, p.3) or being "merely parasitic on their predecessors' texts" (Hadley, 2010, p.58). Although Gutleben (2013, p. 37) argues that the genre foregrounds "the voices of those ethnically, socially or sexually underprivileged characters" which are marginalised or excluded from Victorian fiction, the tone of his study may be interpreted as ambivalent, given its claim that the difference between neo-Victorian and Victorian fiction is superficial. While he concedes that the portrayal of the marginalised of Victorian society may have a critical function he suggests that, just as Victorian authors wrote fiction for a Victorian readership, so too do authors of neo-Victorian fiction reflect the opportunistic trend for the reader's concern with political correctness. I would argue that these novels, even those such as mine who are re-working an existing text, are engaged in a much more complex process and are ultimately concerned with the parallels between time past and time present. Despite the late Victorian setting and the imitative style of writing of my novel, my perspective is one of human motivations and psychological drives which apply to human nature in any period, therefore contemporary readers can identify with the attitudes and behaviours of the story's characters. Although the novel is an example of faux Victorian novels which offer themselves "as stylistic imitations of Victorian fiction" (Mitchell, 2010, p.117), it also reimagines and extends the story of Henry Jekyll. My adaptation shares

the narrative properties of a Victorian novel “without overtly drawing attention to the temporal location of its production in the present” and without drawing attention to its ‘inauthentic’ status, which serves to connect in the reader’s mind the text with the Victorian present it represents (Mitchell, 2010, p.118). The reader is therefore able to read my novel as a ‘genuine’ alternative narrative to that presented in Stevenson’s story, because I have sought “to incorporate rather than efface” (Hadley, 2010, p.58). In the same way, and appropriately in the context of *Jekyll and Hyde*, my novel is a doubled thing, being simultaneously serious and playful; mock and authentic; faux and genuine. However, although it is an imitation, it can be read independently from the original and with no requirement on the part of the reader to be familiar with Stevenson’s story. This suggestion is supported by Linda Hutcheon’s claim that “we may actually read or see that so-called original *after* we have experienced the adaptation, thereby challenging the authority of any notion of priority” (2013, p.xiii). Furthermore, “modern audiences already come to a well-known novel with a large amount of information about its cultural presence and cultural history” (Shachar, 2012, p.145), and this is arguably nowhere more evident than with *Jekyll and Hyde*, therefore the reader of my novel will likely know at least the basic plot of the original without having actually read it.

Mitchell (2010, p.7) sees neo-Victorian fiction as concerned less with making sense of the Victorian past than with “offering it as a cultural memory” by a reconstruction, both “in and by the text, and also in the reader’s imagination.” The job of an adaptation writer is arguably easier than that of a writer who undertakes an ‘original’ novel and the reader may correctly insist that the story of *Jekyll and Hyde* is itself a cultural memory. However, it may also be argued that it is the persistence of this cultural memory which makes it potentially more difficult to persuade a reader to accept an alternative version, however respectful may be the adaptor’s intention towards the original story. Marta Bryk (2004, p.207-8) sees Valerie Martin’s *Mary Reilly* as a condemnation of Stevenson’s inadequate portrayal of late Victorian society, although any subversive motives have been denied by the author. For Bryk, Martin’s revision offers a more comprehensive view of the interactions of class, gender and sexuality. Although Bryk notes that Martin has claimed her novel simply to be a re-telling which pays *homage* to Stevenson’s story, Bryk claims that “Martin’s attitude to the original story is far more ambivalent than she actually admits”. Leach (2010, p.86) takes

Bryk's argument further, arguing that Martin's novel highlights the parallels between Jekyll's exploitative relationship to his servants and Hyde's exploitation of the poor as victims of his crime sprees. However, the fact that the most serious crime portrayed in Stevenson's story is the murder of Sir Danvers Carew would seem to resist this viewpoint. Therefore, while my adaptation features the exploitation by Jekyll towards his maid, this inclusion was to highlight the rapacious nature of Jekyll/Hyde and to facilitate the birth of the next generation of Jekyll/Hyde, as other adaptations have done, as opposed to a comment on social hierarchy. I have taken a similar approach to Martin in the sense that I emphasise the existence of various Hyde-like traits in Jekyll before the transformation. Although Bryk suggests that Martin's novel mounts a challenge to Stevenson's text, Leach argues that it is possible to remain faithful to the 'hypotext', whilst simultaneously challenging it via a revisionary 'hypertext', terms coined by Gerard Genette in his book *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (1997). I would therefore argue that both Martin's novel and my own represent a strategy which emphasises the parallels with Stevenson's text in order to re-create and augment his portrayal of Jekyll. I would add that both Martin's and my own adaptation reflect neither "the urge to consume and erase the memory of the adapted text" nor the desire to "pay tribute by copying" (Hutcheon, 2013, p.6), but seek to alter reader perception by expressing alternative perspectives and filtering the story through our own sensibility and interests (Hutcheons, 2013, p.18). In my novel, however, Evangeline does not represent a parallel to the character of Mary, who is seen by Bryk as inviting comparisons with the moral norm exemplified by Gabriel Utterson. My intention in creating the character of Evangeline was not to portray Henry's direct opposite, in the sense of someone being 'good' (which would contradict my opposition to rigid divisions), but to portray someone who personified the acceptance of their own flaws and frailties and who was prepared to do something 'bad' for a greater good. Further to Bryk's assertion that Martin's novel suggests Jekyll's psychological split as "only one of many different manifestations of "a more general fissure within the very fabric of Victorian society" (2004, p.212), my novel is based on the assertion that the psychological split has its *source* in those societal cracks. Linking Bryk's claims regarding Martin's adaptation with my earlier reference to the similarities between my novel and Jean Rhys's prequel to *Jane Eyre*, there is a counterargument which identifies *Wide Sargasso Sea* as "oppositional, even subversive" and demonstrates the diversity of adaptations as a genre which affords "many opportunities for divergence as adherence, for

assault as well as homage” (Sanders, 2006, p.9). Therefore, whilst my novel may have some correlation with Rhys’s in a narrative sense, I would suggest that its impulse is less oppositional and more affectionate. On the other hand, what Rhys’s novel and my own share, and what some criticism may fail to consider, is “the ongoing experiences of pleasure for the reader[...]in tracing the intertextual relationships” (Sanders, 2006, p.45). These similarities and differences signify the usefulness of adaptations as responses to their source text from revised cultural and political positions. They also frequently highlight “troubling gaps, absences, and silences within the canonical texts to which they refer” (Sanders, 2006, p.98), and, particularly in the case of canonical Victorian works, “establish[...]more serious thematic, aesthetic or ideological links” (Gutleben, 2013, p.17). These gaps and links are then explored in diverse ways and from many perspectives, whether from an oppositional stance, as in *Wide Sargassa Sea*, or, as in my novel, a viewpoint which hopes to make explicit what I perceive as implicit in the impulse of the original story and which the author repressed in a way to attract the approval of a Victorian readership. By writing an adaptation which engages in the process of ‘defamiliarization,’ my novel reveals what has been suppressed in the original (Sanders, 2006, p.99).

Returning to Mitchell’s point about offering the Victorian past as a cultural memory, I would suggest that what adaptations of *Jekyll and Hyde* achieve are a constant re-embodiment of the Victorian context in which the story was written, both in the reader’s imagination and by those who seek to reconstruct a *concept* of the Victorian past and/or the story of Dr. Jekyll. As Mitchell states, referring to the neo-Victorian fiction of Sarah Waters, rather than courting historical accuracy, “proceeding through invention, she pursues the *illusion* of authenticity” and “offers her narratives as spectral additions to our cultural memory[...]by focusing on invisible desire and practises” (2010, p.120; 141). My concern with historical accuracy when writing the novel, while obviously not dispensed with, was secondary to the pursuit of the illusion of authenticity and to the focus on those issues in Stevenson’s story which seem to be invisible but tangible. As Gardner states, a writer must convince the reader that the story’s events really happened, or that they might have happened “or else to engage the reader’s interest in the patent absurdity of the lie” (1991, p.22), and none of these demand historical accuracy. Rousselot (2014, p.4) argues that the neo-historical novel is concerned with the illusion of reality, aiming only “at conveying a surface image of the

real and, unlike the historical novel, its “verisimilitude can be endowed with subversive capabilities” by simultaneously attempting *and* refusing to render the past accurately. I would suggest that this apparently contradictory impulse can be identified in my novel for two reasons: firstly, it would be difficult, if not impossible to render the past accurately from the lived experience of a twenty-first-century perspective; secondly, but arguably more significantly, the imaginative and artistic impulse involved in creative writing is far stronger than the desire to write with historical accuracy. Of course a writer must take care not to prick a needle in the balloon of illusion, but the need to evoke emotions and relatable characters, both for the author and the reader, takes precedence over the concern to portray a historically accurate representation of the context. The writer of neo-Victorian fiction, therefore, must be concerned with historical accuracy only to the extent that it preserves the illusion of reality sufficiently, but not to the extent that it becomes the focus of the novel or that it becomes an obstacle for the author, around which creativity cannot move.

By exploring gender and sexuality and making these explicit in my novel, and staying as faithful as possible to the original story, I hoped to “produce both the shock of recognition and the fright of estrangement” which Mitchell identifies as a feature of neo-Victorian fiction (2010, p.177). It was my intention that the reader should recognise both the Victorian setting and the *Jekyll and Hyde* story, but it was also my intention that the ‘fright of estrangement’ would not be premature, hence the postponement of the revelation that Evangeline’s *beau* is Dr. Jekyll, and that the estrangement would have its source in the subversion of what we expect of the original plot, Jekyll’s bachelor status, his suicide, the lack of sex in a Victorian novel, a heroine and our perception of Edward Hyde. What neo-Victorian fictions and adaptations share is their ability to provide “the comfort of ritual combined with the piquancy of surprise” which Linda Hutcheon (2013, p.4) argues provides pleasure for the reader or viewer. To appropriate an argument from Barthes’ *The Pleasure of the Text*, I would add that the multiplicity of adaptations provides for the reader the opportunity for an additional frisson, due to the

“layering of significance; as to the children’s game of topping hands, the excitement comes[...]at the moment when each (different) hand skips over the next[...]that the hole, the gap, is created and carries off the subject of the game – the subject of the text” (1975, p.12).

However, I would add that this combination of sensations applies equally to the writer, since the piquancy of surprise can occur when one's characters make a decision which seems to come independently from any conscious authorial intent.

My narrative strategy exploits the trope in sensation novels which uses "melodramatic and twisting plots, which revolve around a central secret" that is revealed at the end and which transforms the reader's knowledge of what came before (Mitchell, 2010, p.123). Therefore, a noteworthy aspect of my novel, especially for those readers who are familiar with the original *Jekyll and Hyde*, is that, added to the central secret of the true identity of Hyde which transforms the knowledge of what the reader knew of Jekyll, a further transformation of knowledge is afforded via the secondary central secret of the motivation behind Jekyll's behaviour and of the 'true' cause of Jekyll's death.

Mitchell (2010, p. 139) states that "the Victorian sensation novel is the proto-detective novel" which typically features a male figure who embarks on a crusade to disclose secrets, right wrongs and restore "patriarchal order with the zeal of the monomaniac." Mitchell's description is apposite in the context of *Jekyll and Hyde*, its focus being one of fiction's most infamous monomaniacs created at a time when society was arguably at its most obsessed with the mind and especially with insanity. Indeed, Stevenson's story concentrates almost exclusively on monomaniacs, with Gabriel Utterson fitting the description of Mitchell's male figure who attempts to restore order and who is rewarded ultimately with the prize of Jekyll's large fortune left to the lawyer in his will. However, Jekyll himself also fits the same description. He becomes obsessed with disclosing the secret of his dark side in the sense that he attempts to rid himself of his worse nature, due to the stress of keeping his secret self under control; thus he attempts to right the wrong that is part of him, in order to cleanse his psyche and live only as the 'good' and respectable doctor, thereby restoring patriarchal order. It is therefore fitting, in keeping with my desire to write an adaptation which acts as a complement to the original story, that Evangeline is also a monomaniac. She becomes determined to disclose the secret behind Henry's behaviour and the secret behind his estranged relationship with his sister. She has a strong need to right the wrongs of what she perceives to be moral injustices and to restore order so that everyone, as far as possible, is happy. However, in displacing Utterson as the primary detective figure she also subverts the trend and follows her instincts rather than convention. Aside from the obvious

issue of her gender, in her quest to disclose secrets she creates her some of her own. By her own standards she sets about righting wrongs, but in doing so she herself commits a heinous crime in the eyes of the law. Ultimately she does restore order, but her methods and intention are not remotely invested in the patriarchal order. Julie Sanders (2006, p.128) makes the point that when the reader encounters an adaptation of a Victorian novel they act as a detective of sorts, “recognising the parallels but also the significant differences[...]and deciphering a whole set of codes and clues into the process.”

What the plethora of re-workings of *Jekyll and Hyde* demonstrates is that, far from being simply modernisations or rehashed versions, many of them are “creative and influential in their own right” and prove that literature’s fundamental impulse is towards the generating of “multiple interactions and a matrix of possibilities” (Sanders, 2006, p.160). An example of the product of creative possibility in my adaptation is the back story of Jekyll’s footman, Bradshaw. In the course of my research I came across a list of some of the victims of the Peterloo massacre. One of these was a man with the surname Bradshaw, a name shared by Dr Jekyll’s footman (Bush, 2005, p.74). This inspired the idea that, just as Poole is descended from *Jane Eyre*’s Grace Poole, Bradshaw has descended from a non-fictional protester from Manchester. The very nature of my novel means that I’ve accorded to Jekyll a past, therefore it seems justifiable to allude to a past in connection with other characters in the novel.

Another creative possibility, that of Henry and Evangeline’s mutual love of the poet Shelley, was inspired by Frank McLynn’s chapter title ‘Prometheus Unbound’ in his biography of Stevenson, which suggested to me a connection between the poet and the ideas of a Faustian over-reaching and anarchical tendencies of Jekyll. Furthermore, Shelley’s works contain themes and styles which fit into a Gothic convention, which would appeal to Evangeline, who is a lover of thrilling tales of adventure and terror. This in turn inspired the ‘hook’ which would lure her into the affections of Henry, who does not make an initially favourable impression on her. The Shelley connection also links the poet, who “often names members of the government when he attacks the state” (Gardner, 2011, p.32), with Jekyll, who is in part politically motivated (in a personal way) in his rage, as indicated by the fact that his murder victim is a member of the government, Sir Danvers Carew MP. Finally, Gardner (2011, p.72) suggests that it has frequently been observed that within Shelley’s life

and work “contradictions and tensions are apparent; on the one side, we find the classically educated gentleman, born to privilege [...] On the other we find the atheist, radical, 'revolutionary social and political thinker,” a description which may equally apply to Jekyll.

What does literary criticism have to say when a reader becomes a writer and subsequently produces literature which is itself available for reader interpretations and creative writing re-workings? Adaptations raise questions about the interchangeable roles of author and reader and whether or not the notion of the power of the reader is destabilised the moment the reader ceases to be just a reader and becomes either a researcher or a creative writer, or both. One argument is that once the reader engages in a deep analysis of a text, even before any re-writing is undertaken, the act of questioning in the context of a degree of critical detachment undermines the act of reading. On the other hand, there is an argument that suggests that critical engagement intensifies the reading and strengthens the status of reader. However, the re-writing of a text complicates the argument further. Although the writing of an adaptation would obviously not be possible without reading, the process of re-creation may seem to suggest that the act of reading becomes, at this point, secondary, and that the (new) authorial position is now the more significant of the two, once again interrogating Barthes’ theory. According to Graeme Harper and Jeri Kroll (2008. p.3), the study of creative writing “most often involves two elements: the act of writing creatively, and the act of critically considering that act and its results,” both of which raise “questions about how to employ discoveries, how to communicate information and how to evaluate understanding.” An example of the way in which my adaptation links these aspects is the research connection between Dr. Isaac Baker Brown and the second Middlesex County asylum advertisements distributed at the Great Exhibition. An idea formed about a possible relative of Henry’s who had suffered at the hands of Baker Brown, who also works at an asylum partly funded by Danvers Carew, a politician who had vetoed sanctions and inspections.

Another example of links between research and creativity, and the potential of adaptations, is the use of phrases from Stevenson’s original story. In chapter seventeen I use the phrase “like one approaching home,” before including the entire exchange, from Stevenson’s novel, between Utterson and Hyde. I noted the fact that Hyde uses the Latin phrase *a propos*, then later says to Utterson ‘I did not think you would have lied’. I reasoned that these details

expose the fact that there is more of Henry Jekyll in Hyde than the doctor would have the reader, and Utterson, believe, which is the premise for the last chapter, with its suggestion, that, although the implication is that Henry Jekyll has disappeared some time before Hyde dies, in fact Jekyll must exist for as long as Hyde does. Consequently, I would argue that adaptations as a genre act as a response to the adapted text and seem to complicate Barthes' notion of authorial death, suggesting instead that if the reader metaphorically kills the author, then the writer of an adaptation performs a resurrection. Contrary to Barthes' claim that "the *explanation* of a work is always sought in the man or woman who produced it[...], as if it were always[...]the author 'confiding' in us" (1977, p. 143), I would argue that writers of adaptations, and particularly those who adapt *Jekyll and Hyde*, look to the *potential* of a work and consider the many *possible* explanations, choosing that which strikes the loudest chord within themselves. In that sense, of course, I am agreeing to some extent with Barthes' privileging of reader authority, but what I am suggesting is that writing, and especially the writing of adaptations, entails *prolonging* the life of the author in order to engage them as part of a multi-directional dialogue; as Tim Middleton (1999, p.xiii) states, in his introduction to the story "[t]he reader is drawn into the tale and *collaborates* in the production of meaning" (italics mine). Hutcheon (2013, p. xvi) states that "telling, showing and interacting" are the three major ways in which we engage with stories, and adaptations engage in telling and interacting, which involve a dialogue with both the author of the original text and with oneself as reader and writer.

In conclusion, my adaptation demonstrates the potential of a 'hypertext' to act as a memory, in this case to encourage the reader to remember Stevenson's story not as a Victorian artefact but as an iconic cultural text whose complex composition invites constant "repetition, restructurations, through embodied memories, both personal and collective, and, importantly, through the manifold meanings that we continue to attribute it" (Mitchell, 2010, p.182). Far from repeating the original story, adaptations complicate and expand. As one critic states, in scientific terms they are the "crucial difference between a clone and a genetic adaptation" (Sanders, 2006, p.12). To use an analogy of my own, and to extend Hutcheon's argument that "as *a process of creation*, the act of adaptation[...]has been called both appropriation and salvaging" (2013, p.8), it is unlikely that the person responsible for a house renovation would attract criticism for either destroying the original building or for not

building a brand new house. According to Margaret Atwood (2002, p.178), fiction writers in general “must commit acts of larceny, or else of reclamation, depending on how you look at it,” therefore adaptations differ from other forms of fiction only in that they openly acknowledge their source texts, but they nevertheless provide to those texts new “thetic positions,” a term coined by Kristeva (Allen, 2000, p.53). By attributing to *Jekyll and Hyde* a subtext concerning gender and sexuality, my novel exploits the rich heritage of adaptation and cultural recollection, (re)presentation and re-imagining, and explores the ways in which these expressions examine the past in order to make sense of the present (Mitchell, 2010, p.183). Hutcheon (2013, p.28) argues that the 1971 Hammer film *Dr. Jekyll as Sister Hyde* symbolises Britain’s confused responses to feminism after the 1960s and I would add that society, not just in Britain but globally and within both genders, still exhibits a confused and frequently anxious response to feminism. At the forefront of my agenda when writing the adaptation was a trifold motive: to re-imagine the original story in a way that expressed my interpretation whilst keeping the essence of Stevenson’s story intact, to offer a reading experience which took pleasure in “the tension between the familiar and the raw” (Sanders, 2006, p.14), and to take pleasure in the process of writing a text which involved interweaving the plot and details of a familiar story with my ‘new’ story. Atwood (2002, p.179) identifies “the shamanistic role of the writer” and adaptations similarly involve a process of alchemy, involving reading, imagination, observation and experience. My adaptation can be read as an expression of “the nuances of the sexual landscape of the nineteenth century” and of the notion that “authors (and readers) are also refusing to simplify contemporary sexuality” (Saxey, 2009, p. 80), despite the existing prevalence within society to dichotomise both men and women. It also suggests that literature itself can fall victim to a dichotomising interpretation and therefore my approach demonstrates the feminist asserting “her own equivalent right to liberate new (and perhaps different) significances” from a particular text “because she is, after all, asking new and different questions from it” (Kolodny, 2011, p.219). It is my hope that these questions have generated a ‘new and different’ adaptation.

APPENDIX

LIST OF SEQUELS, PREQUELS AND RETELLINGS

(Source: www.robert-louis-stevenson.org/richard-dury-archive/retellings)

1886	Anon. (1886). 'The Strange Case of Dr. T and Mr. H. / Or Two Single Gentlemen rolled into one'. <i>Punch</i> 90 (6 February 1886).
1886	Law, Arthur (1886). <i>Strange Case of the Prime Minister and Mr Muldoon (With Apologies to Mr Stevenson)</i> . London: Empire Printing Co. Ltd.
1886	'Robert Bathos Staving Son' [pseud.]. (1886 or 1887). <i>The Stranger Case of Dr Hide and Mr Crushall: A Rum-Antic Story. By Robert Bathos Staving Son</i> . London: Bevington & Co [This is from the entry in the British Library catalogue; G has '...Starving Son. London: Benington']
1888	Anon. (1888). 'The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde. In a Minim-Glass'. <i>Fun</i> , Aug. 22 1888.
1890	Little, Francis H. (1890). <i>The Untold Sequel of The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> . Boston: Pinckney Publishing Company
1892	Patten, Gilbert (1892). <i>Double-Voiced Dan, the Always-on-Deck Detective, or, the Female Jekyll and Hyde: A Weird Mystery of the Great Metropolis</i> . New York: Beadle & Adams (Beadle's New York Dime Library).
1894	Bridges, Robert (1894). ['Jekyll Meets Hyde', Geduld's title]. From <i>Overheard in Arcady</i> . London: Dent.
1922	Feldinger, Heinrich (1922). <i>Das Verschwinden des Doktor Jekyll</i> . Dresden-A. : Mignon-Verlag. [22 pp.]
1925	Inagaki, Taruho (1925). 'Dr. Jekyll and Mr Hyde'. In <i>Tokyo Attractions That Shouldn't Be Missed</i> . Eng- transl. In <i>One thousand and one-second stories</i> . Los Angeles, CA : Sun & Moon Press, 1998.
1931	McLaughlin, R.J. (1931). 'Doctor Jekyll'. <i>Horsehair Santa Claus and Other Stories</i> . Boston: Christopher Publishing Co.
1941	Leaf, Munro (1941). 'The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde'. <i>American Magazine</i> 131v: 104
1946	Green, Paul (1946). 'Doctor Hyde'. <i>Salvation on a String and Other Tales of the South</i> . New York/London: Harper & Bros.

1949	Armstrong, Anthony [Anthony Armstrong Willis (1897-1976)] (1949). 'The Case of Mr. Pelham'. <i>Esquire</i> . Also <i>Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine</i> 139 (June 1955). Also (1957).
1956	Johns, Veronica Parker (1956). 'Mr Hyde-de-Ho'. <i>Ellery Queen's Awards: 11th Series</i> , ed. Ellery Queen [pseud.]. New York: Simon & Schuster.
1956	Maurice Limat [1914-2002]; transl. By L.M. de Waas (1965). <i>De vrouwelijke Jekyll</i> . Antwerp: Uitgeverij "Libra "
1962	Russell, Ray (1962). 'Sagittarius'. <i>Playboy</i> , March 1962
1963	Rackham, John [John Phillifent] (1963). 'Dr Jeckers and Mr Hyde'. <i>Amazing Stories, Fact and Science Fiction</i> 37 No.8 (Aug. 1963): 68-83.
1968	<i>Jekyll-Hyde Heroes</i> . DC Comics World's Finest Comics, February 1968.
1971	Berger, Thomas (1971). 'Professor Hyde'. <i>The Fully Automated Love Life of Henry Keanridge and 12 other Stories</i> . Chicago: Playboy Press
1971	Ross, Marilyn (1971). <i>Barnabas, Quentin and Dr. Jekyll's Son</i> . New York: Coronet Communications (Paperback Library Gothic, 27).
1974	Sontag, Susan (1974). 'Doctor Jekyll'. <i>Partisan Review</i> 41iv: 539-552, 586-603. Also in: Sontag, Susan (1978). <i>I, Etcetera</i> . New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, pp. 187-203.
1975	Feinstein, Albert B. (1975). <i>Dr Jekyll and Mr Mad</i> . New York: Warner Paperback Library
1979	Savater, Fernando (1979). <i>Criaturas de aire</i> . Barcelona: Destino
1979	Estleman, Loren D. (1979). <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Holmes</i> . New York: Doubleday
1982	Reouvain, René (1982). <i>Elémentaire, mon cher Holmes</i> . Paris: Denoël (Sueurs Froides).
1983	Geare, Michael & Michael Corby (1983). <i>Dracula's Diary</i> . ***: Beaufort Books.
1983	Scott, Jeremy [Kay Dick [1915-2001]] (1983). <i>Doctor Jekyll and Miss Hyde</i> . London: W.H. Allen.
1987	Sanford, John A. (1987). <i>The Strange Trial of Mr. Hyde: A New Look at the Nature of Human Evil</i> . San Francisco: Harper & Row.
1988	Thomas, Donald (1988). <i>Jekyll, Alias Hyde. A Variation</i> . London/New York: Macmillan/St. Martin's Press.
1989	Kessel, John (1989). 'Mr Hyde Visits the Home of Dr Jekyll'. <i>Aboriginal SF</i> March/April 1989. Reprinted in Kessel, John. <i>The Pure Product</i> . New York: Tor/Tom Doherty Associates, 1997.

1989	Tennant, Emma (1989). <i>Two Women of London. The Strange Case of Ms Jekyll and Mrs Hyde</i> . London: Faber and Faber.
1989	Windig, René & Eddie de Jong (1989). <i>Dr. Jekyll and mr. Heinz</i> . Amsterdam: Gezellig en Leuk. Repr. 2001, Amsterdam : Oog & Blick
1989	Michele Serra (1989). 'Jekyll'. In <i>Il nuovo che avanza</i> . Milano: Feltrinelli. 53-65.
1990	Bloch, Robert & André Norton (1990). <i>The Jekyll Legacy</i> . New York: Tor Horror/Tom Doherty Associates
1990	Martin, Valerie (1990). <i>Mary Reilly</i> . New York/London: Doubleday/Black Swan.
1992	Newman, Kim (1992). <i>Anno Dracula</i> . London: Simon & Schuster (New York: Avon Books).
1994	Kate McMullan, Paul Van Munching; Paul Van Munching & Glenn Dean (Illustrators) (1994) . <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> . New York: Random House Trade (Bullseye Chillers)
1995	Grant, John; Harvey Parker & Ron Tiner (Illustrators) (1995). <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde</i> . London/?New York: Usborne Publishing Ltd. (The Usborne Librabry of Fantasy and Adventure / E.D.C. Publishing (Library of Fear and Fantasy Series)
1995	Newman, Kim (1995). <i>Dracula Cha Cha Cha</i> . London: Pocket Books (aka: <i>Judgment of Tears: Anno Dracula 1959</i> . New York: Avon Books).
1995	Knight, Amarantha (1995). <i>The Darker Passions: Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> . New York: Masquerade.
1996	Johnson, Robert & Joanne L. Mattern (1996). <i>The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde</i> . ***: HarperPrism (0061064149)
1996	Swindells, Robert (1996). <i>Jacqueline Hyde</i> . London: Doubleday UK, £9.99 (hc). Reissued 1997, London: Corgi Yearling (pb) (ISBN: 0440863295).
1997	Greenburg, Dan, Jack E. Davis (Illustrator) (1997). <i>Dr. Jekyll, Orthodontist</i> (Zack Files). ***: Putnam Publishing Group (0448413388). Publ. in UK as <i>The Zack Files 5: Dr Jekyll, My Dentist</i> . London: Macmillan Children's Books (033035356X).
1997	Thompson, Brian M. (1997). 'The Mouse and the Master'. In Resnick, Mike (ed.) <i>Sherlock Holmes in Orbit</i> . ***/London: Communications/MJF Books.
1998	Naugrette, Jean-Pierre (1998). <i>Le crime étrange de Mr Hyde</i> . Paris: Actes Sud/Babel. ISBN 2-7427-1796-X.

1998	Nancy Butcher, Alexander Steele, Jane McCreary (Illustrator) (1998). <i>Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Dog</i> (Adventure of Wishbone, No 14). New York: Big Red Chair Books (1570643881)
1999	Newman, Kim (1999). 'Further Developments in the Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde'. In Maxim Jubowski (ed.) (1999). <i>Chronicles of Crime: The Second Ellis Peters Memorial Anthology of Historical Crime</i> . London: Headline. Reprinted in Kim Newman (2000). <i>Unforgivable Stories</i> . London: Pocket Books, pp. 11-51.
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1999	(6-issue magazine version), 2000 (book-form) Moore, Alan & Kevin O'Neill (art) (2000). <i>The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen</i> . New York/London: DC Comics/Titan Books.
c 2000	Salling, Aage & Erik Hvid (eds.); Robert Dewsnap (revisions); Kim Broström (ill.); Gunnar Breiding (map). <i>Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde</i> . Copenhagen etc.: Aschehoug etc. (Easy Readers).
2001	Lefort, Luc (adapt. de); Ludovic Debeurme (ill.) (2001). <i>L'Etrange cas du Dr Jekyll et de M. Hyde</i> . Paris: Albums Nathan. ISBN: 209210097-1
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2002	Jerry Kramsky [Fabrizio Ostani] (script), Lorenzo Mattotti (art); (2002). <i>Dr Jekyll et Mr Hyde</i> . Paris : Casterman. ISBN 2203389885 / Torino: Einaudi / Amsterdam: Oog & Blik.
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2003	Pettus, Jason (2003). <i>The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Reimagined for Modern Times</i> . E-book at http://www.jasonpettus.com/ebooks/jekyll.htm .
2004	Vandelli, Luciano (2004). <i>Il dottor Jekyll e mister Holmes</i> . Milano: Boldoni Castoldi Dalai.
2004	René Hemmerling (2004). 'Dr. S. und Mrs. R.'. <i>Noch ein blödes Märchenbuch</i> . Norderstedt: Books on Demand. 64-8.
2006	Naugrette, Jean-Pierre (2006). <i>Les Variations Enigma</i> . Rennes: Terre de Brumes. ISBN 2 84362 290 5.
2008	Banis, Victor J. (2008). <i>Drag Thing, or, The Strange Case of Jackle and Hyde</i> . Rockville, Md.: Wildside Press. 1434401928.

2012	Keller, M. Elias (2012). <i>Strange Case of Mr. Bodkin and Father Whitechapel</i> . ISBN: 978-0-615-67024-9. Available in various formats through the principle on-line bookstores.
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